

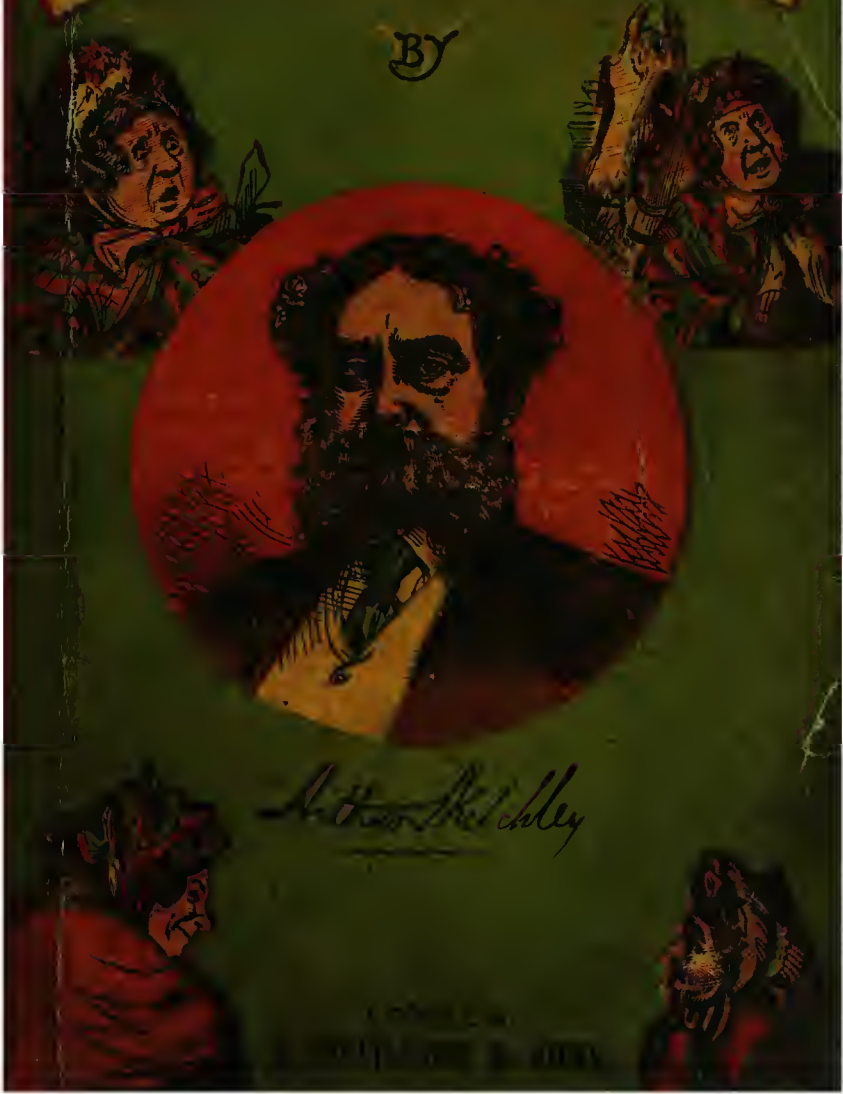
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SECOND SERIES

BY



Arthur M. Ashley



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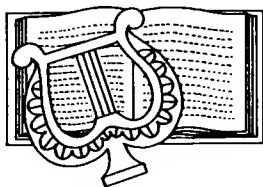
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THE
BROWN PAPERS.

SECOND SERIES.

BY
ARTHUR SKETCHLEY

REPRINTED FROM "FUN."

LONDON:
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS,
THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL.

1870.

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Introductory Epistle.

To the Publisher.



ONERED SUR,—If you wishes to know, all I've got to say is, I don't think as ever I could 'ave been brought to writin' anythink, was it ever so, thro' only 'avin' six lessons late in life, and if any one had told me as that Mr. Scratchley would 'ave turned agin me like a reg'lar king's evidence, I wouldn't 'ave believed 'em, the same as that Probert as I've 'eard my dear mother speak about as 'ung that there Thurtel, as murdered the man a-drivin' of him down the Edgware-road in a shay, as was brought on by gamblin', as proves what a blessin' the buses is, for I'm sure no one could be murdered in cold blood in one of them, and no one-'orse shay livin' wouldn't carry arf the parties as crowds down there now; and as to gamblin', why it's that common now-a-days, as you may see bits of boys a-playin' at pitch-and-toss all over the place, as, in course, is werry immoral, tho' I don't see the difference myself between that and 'orse-racin',

as is the same as goin' into the stocks, as 'ave been the ruin of thousands, and I well remembers seein' two men, leastways young fellers, in on Brook-green, with my own eyes, as 'ad been caught a-playin' chuck fardin on a tomb-stone on a Sunday, under the beadle's werry nose, as were a-'avin' of his forty winks in the church porch of a brilin' arternoon with a charity sermon, as their low lived langwidge disturbed, and then was that insultin' to the churchwardens as ended the day in the round 'ouse, with the stocks and cart's tail on the Monday, thro' bein' rogues and waggerbones, according to law, as in course did ought to be put down, partikler in them out of the way parts where families' washin' is took in reg'lar, and linen all about the place, as is all built over now, tho' once a fair, as I can jest remember, tho' not the oldest inhabitants, as the sayin' is, for I couldn't have been more than six years old, if as much, but can remember the learned pig as well as if he'd been my own brother as went with us, tho' only jest three months, so, in course, could not be left. Leastways my dear mother didn't consider it right.

I can't remember much about that fair except some gingerbread nuts and a fight as pretty nigh frightened a aunt of mine as were always weak in the 'ead into fits, and 'ad to be cupped twice behind the ears afore the week were out.

But law, as to wantin' me to put all my ideers on paper, bless you, "Lloyd's News" wouldn't 'old 'em,

as is the fullest paper as ever I read, and well worth the money, tho' get thro' it all I never could, and even Brown I've known now get with the weather that sultry in 'is shirt-sleeves.

You see it isn't only wot I knows myself, as is a good deal, but what others 'as told me, partikler a aunt of my dear mother's as 'adn't lost a tooth, nor yet took to glasses up to eighty-nine, and only laid two days in bed, as a cold in the head carried off in the end, poor dear, and a kind soul as died the same day as King George the Fourth, a-rememberin' 'im bein' born as if it was yesterday, as come of a long-lived family, thro' 'er father bein' of the Scotch persuasion as 'ad fought for the Pretender, and been left for dead on the field of battle, thro' bein' bagginetted when wounded by order of that there Duke of Cumberland, a German brute as were own uncle to King George the Third, as I've been showed 'is statty in a billy-cock 'at in the middle of Scavenger's-square, as were once thought a deal on, a fashionable part, but quite give over now by the swells.

In course I knows a deal about London, thro' bein' my native 'ills, as the sayin' is, and it give me quite a turn when I 'eard say as they was a-goin' to pull down Temple Bar to make way for that street as is to run thro' the Law Courts.

I must say as that Tems Imbankment is lovely, only them beastly gasomiters did ought to be pulled down, as is 'ighly dangerous, and if they was to go off

would blow every one to bits, and set the Tems a fire, as the sayin' is ; as is pre'aps the reason why Queen Wictoria wouldn't open it, as would 'ave been wuss than Guy Fox, to find 'erself blowed up sudden as far as Bedlam ; for there's no tellin' where she might come down any more than a balloon without a safety walve, as is blowed out by gas, and will esplode in a instant with only a lantern brought near, in a open field where it fell, as was in course only that country-man's hignorance, thro' never bein' used to it, tho' I wish for my part as they would light up the country with gas as a plowed field pretty nigh proved my hend thro' a-takin' a wrong turnin' in a narrer lane one dark night, and stuck in a rut knee-deep arter a 'arvest 'ome supper till daylight did appear, as the sayin' is.

But as to that Fleet Ditch a-bustin', why in course it is but nat'ral as must 'ave a went like every-think else, with that Wireduck a-weighin' that 'eavy on it, as we all knows as water will find its level, as the sayin' is, and overflow the basements down in Westminster.

But, law, 'ow I am a-runnin' on ; and in course you only wants to know if there's any objecshuns to a-repeatin' what I 'ave said afore, as in course there is not, thro' never bein' one to eat my words, as is my bond, as the sayin' is ; and 'ow Mrs. Pollin could ever bring 'erself for to kiss the book to a downright falsity I can't think, as she must 'ave knowed wasn't true, and give the judge quite a turn, as turned pale thro' 'is

wig in seein' of 'er do it, with that 'ere council a-sayin' to 'er on the top of 'is voice, "Remember you're on your hoath," but never flinched, as I always did consider a double dealin' party since that time, as she sold that Angola shawl twice over, and 'ad the money from both me and Mrs. Malkin, as I give it up to thro' 'avin' so much settin' up with Malkin's asthma, but any time as you're a-passin', and will look in, shall be proud, as is quite 'andy now, and only one floor above me, with a fine view of the Cherrin' Cross Station and the Clock Tower, as makes it quite cheerful, bein' loomanatin' in the distance, as the sayin' is, let alone the river and all the bridges with the Imbankment runnin' close under the winders, as is more convenient than the subbugs for Brown, as is late out and don't care about a gardin', let alone it bein' 'is own property, and all the rest of the 'ouse let out in offices, escept that young man as lodges with us, as I wouldn't 'ave brought with me only he begged that 'ard, as I do not consider strong, with only one lung and 'is liver werry much out of order. So no more at present from yours respected,

MARTHA BROWN.

P.S.—I 'ave 'eard say as there is a many as wants for to know a deal about me, as I shan't give in to their vulgar curocity, as the sayin' is, as can keep myself to myself with no objecshuns for to up and speak to any party as acts that 'onerable, as in course

any gentleman would, a-meanin' yourself, with my complements to your 'onered pa, not 2-forgettin' all enquirin' friends as shall look 'in some day, thro' bein' that 'andy to the railway, as always reminds me of New York, not as your Broadway is to that estent, but little and good is my ways, as don't 'old with them ramblin' out-of-the-way places, but likes a snug corner as is 'ome, as there ain't no place like, as the sayin' is.

THE BROWN PAPERS.



No. I.

Mrs. Brown makes Herself Agreeable.

TWAS the last night of the year a twelve-month ago as we spent with the Rightons, and I says to myself the moment I got in the house, as there was a somethin' come over me, for who should I see a-settin' agin the winder but that fellow Sadling, as I did not expect for to meet, through a-thinkin' as they wasn't on terms, though, perhaps, it's as well to make things up at Christmas time when every one did ought to be jolly.

But he's a double-dyed, black-hearted fellow, as I've know'd from a youth, when he was called serious and used to expound, as made me sick ; a chit of a boy a-talkin' to you about where you was goin' to, an' all that, as I've cut short scores of times, and pretty sharp too.

As soon as I see him in Mrs. Righton's parlour, I know'd as things wouldn't work square through Sadling havin' married Mrs. Righton's niece, a poor,

pale-faced thing, as spoke very like a mouse in a cheese, as the sayin' is, and got six, though not a thrivin' lot, as is never free from colds, a bad sign in my opinion through a-showin' weakness, and I've know'd myself to turn to water in the head.

I never heard that poor Mrs. Sadling complain, though I've often gone to set with her when upstairs, as had her hands full with three on them almost in arms at once, and that fellow a mean beast, as locked up the tea and sugar, so always took a bit in my pocket, as cannot drink cat-lap, as the sayin' is.

We got through tea at Mrs. Righton's pretty well, through me a-talkin' friendly between Mrs. Righton and Mrs. Sadling. Brown he did'n't come in till about seven, and Righton, as is a commercial traveller, wasn't expected home till supper, as would be half-past nine.

It nearly made me sick for to hear that Sadling a-talkin' to his eldest boy, as is his father all over, as it is one person's work for to look to that poor child's cold, and didn't ought to have been out at all, and his father a-makin' of him repeat serious rhymes.

So I says, "Rubbish," quite loud. He ups and says to me, "I'd thank you, Mrs. Brown, not to contaminate my child."

I says, "I'm not a-goin' to, Mr. Sadling, through not bein' of his father," as shut him up pretty quick. I says, "Prayers and hymns is very proper in their places; but," I says, "not for to be made a show on," as makes Mrs. Righton say, "Hear, hear." The colour as that Sadling turned was the kite's foot for yellerness.

So Mrs. Righton, she says, givin' of me a wink, "Mrs. Brown, mum, would you like a hand of cards?"

I says, "I'm agreeable to anythin', as I considers 'all fours' a noble game."

Says Sadling, "If there's cards I leaves the 'ouse, as does my family." "Oh, indeed!" says I; "then no cards for me, as should be sorry to part families; not as we was goin' to play for money, Mr. Sadling, as I knows you object to." Well he might, for he was found out cheatin', at "my bird sings" in his first wife's time, a-drinkin' tea with my own aunt. He kep' a-growin' more livid like every moment, did that Sadling, till Brown come in, and they got a talkin' about them niggers over there, as I know'd would end bad.

So I says, "Bother the blacks! let 'em alone," just for to stop it.

We was only seven without the children, as the two young Sadlings was sent home and the rest went to bed afore nine.

I did think as that evenin' would never come to a end, but when Righton come in about ten it seemed more cheerful, and then we had supper, as was good cut and come again style, a lovely bit of roast beef with plum puddin', and everythin' else homely but good, as was Righton's dinner.

That chap Sadling he would say grace when the meat was uncovered, as put Mrs. Righton out, for he kep' on a-talkin' at me through it, a-mentionin' flesh-pots quite pointed. I didn't take no notice, of course, and we got on with supper very comfortable, and poor Mrs. Sadling seemed to enjoy the bit as she did take, as likewise after a glass of hot, as I mixed for her myself pretty stiff when he wasn't a-lookin', through knowin' as she required it. We really was a-gettin' somethin' like cheerful when Sadling begins a-sayin' we was

perishin' clay. So I says, "Don't you bother about clay now except it is to moisten your own." He says, "Mrs. Brown, you're a lump of profaneness." Well I didn't mind the profaneness, but to be called a lump is more than I could stand. So I says, "Per'aps I may be, through not a-carin' to be a cantin' 'umbug, and wouldn't stoop for to take advantage of my chapel for to take in a poor old woman, and then to neglect her shameful on her dyin' bed."

Well, the words wasn't out of my mouth afore I see Brown give me a look as showed I'd been and put my foot in it, and so I had, for Mrs. Sadling turns round and says, "Are you a-darin' for to illude to my 'usband?" "Well," I says, through feelin' a little warm, "truth is truth, and I was." So he groans out, "Let her alone, Anna Maria, whatever you do. She's a burnin' brand. Go and look to your babe," and she leaves the room.

I says, "A burnin' brand, indeed! Who are you a talkin' to?" for I know'd as it was a cut at my sperrits and water as he was a-givin' on the sly. I says, "Did'nt you marry that old Mrs. Towsell, as was seventy and you only four-and-twenty, and didn't you encourage her in rum and water till she fell for'ards on the bars with a double-bordered nightcap, and carried the marks to her grave through the black a-burnin' in, and could be traced all down her face. No, I will not hold my tongue, Brown; I'll tell him what he's a-darin' for to call me a brand indeed." Well, Mrs. Righton she can't a-bear Sadling, and kep' a-urgin' me on.

So I says, "You're a man, you are, as makes that poor thing your wife all of a tremble, as well she may be, for I've seen the bruises on her myself." So Brown

he gets up and says, "Now I tell you what it is, Martha, if you don't hold your tongue I'll put you out of the room myself." "No," I says, "Brown, that you never will, for," I says, "I've got legs as can carry me, and I'll go myself." Up jumps Mrs. Righton and give Brown a proper settin' down, for she says, "Mr. Brown, please for to remember as this is my room." So Brown he was down in a moment, through bein' quite the gentleman, and says, "I asks pardon."

Righton he's a jolly fellow, and says, "Oh ! bother rows, let's all be friends, and I'll make a bowl of punch," and so he did, and never did I taste better, and then he sung a song as made me nearly die of laughter, and begun for to think as we was goin' to be happy after all. Whether it was the punch or the song, as was about "Coal-black Rose," I don't know, but somethin' or another brought up them beastly blacks agin.

Sadling wasn't spoke to, and why need he come a-shovin' of his nose into other parties' conversations, as come through me a-sayin' as rum was made out of pineapples, and Righton a-replyin' as it growed in Jamaica, where they've been a pepperin' them niggers. "Serve 'em right," says I, "the black butchers," throwed off my guard, as the sayin' is. "Sufferin' righteous," says Sadling, "as the carnal mind persecutes." I bust out a laughin' and was pretty nigh choked through the punch goin' the wrong way, and Sadling says it was a judgment on me. I couldn't stand that from him, so I says, "Don't you be too handy with your judgments, young man, as may come home to you afore you dies." Brown, he says, "Martha, stash it." I says, "Never."

Mrs. Righton, she says, "Let her speak, and if that thing's a man let him answer," for she wanted to have it out with him, through his wife bein' kep' upstairs along with the infant as was a-cryin' Sadling says, "I pities you."

I says, "Well you may, in havin' such a fellow as you in the family," for my tongue was set free, as the children was gone, and his wife not there. "Now," I says, "Samuel Sadling, let me tell you that if ever you lifts your hand agin that poor wife of yours as you knows you did in that situation not six weeks back, that day as I come in sudden, I'll turn you inside out. You know as I could do it, and I will." I says, "You black-hearted, tallow-faced sneak. Now," I says, "I come out to make myself agreeable, and I means to do it; but," I says, "you take warning." I really was a-bilin' over to see how he treated that poor woman. Bless you, he dropped into his boots, as the sayin' is. I says, "Don't speak not another word—I don't want to part man and wife, but I'll stand up for her."

I knowed I got the fellow on the hip, as was afraid of Righton through his being trustee to Mrs. Sadling's bit of money, as her husband has tried to get hold on over and over again, and would have done it but for me a-givin' Mrs. Righton the office, 'cos you see that Sadling's first wife were the widder of a uncle of mine through marriage with his first wife. So Sadling he looks round and says as he didn't know why I attacked him. I says, "Shall I tell you?" Well, that settled him, so he says, "I forgive you; let us shake hands."

I says, "Never will I be double-faced. I'm not a-geoin' to shake hands with you till I sees how you

behaves, and we'll talk more about that next Christmas, as is a time for family meetings as general produces good feelin's." Just then Mrs. Sadling she come in a-sayin' as she was anxious about the baby, and would like for to go home. If you'd seen that Sadling how ready he was, though in general that contradictory. Off they went, and I says, "Good-night" to him, though I didn't give him my hand, but only remarks, "Remember what I've said as I'll certainly stick to."

When they was gone Brown give me a bit of a talking to, as he says he didn't want no words when we got home. So I says, "I 'umbly asks pardon, Mrs. Righton, if I've been and said anything as would cause unpleasantness, as is not my 'abits." She says, "Mrs. Brown, I'd give the world if I could tackle anybody like as you do, for I never see such a woman for putting any one down."

I says, "Them as deserves it I'll always give it to, for if there is anything as I hates in this world its 'umbug; but," I says, "it's a-striking twelve, and here's a happy New Year to us all, and my only hope is as we shall act as well by the year as it will by us, for all years is much the same, and a great deal depends upon how you takes things in this life, and may the present moment be the worst of our lives," as makes Righton say, "Brayvo," and Mrs. Righton she give me a kiss, and we had a kiss all round; and Brown, he says, "Martha, you're a old"—but I wouldn't let him say no more, and home we goes.

No. II.

Mrs. Brown goes into the Country.

I SAYS to Brown, "Brown, if you thinks as I'm a-goin' to have my own daughter married down in them out-of-the-way places unbeknown, you're mistaken, for I'm not a-goin' to do nothin' of the sort." "Well," he says, "go if you like, but you'll find the journey a buster and no mistake."

I says, "I likes that certainly a-comin' from you, as has dragged me through the high seas arter you ; and as to travellin', though it's a thing as I don't hold with, yet it's a duty as I feels to my child." He says, "It's her duty for to come up and be married here I considers."

I says, "You know as it were a promise give last summer, when she had three weeks' holiday, and we didn't think as we should be that comfortable off as to make her turn up her nose at such a place, and I'm sure the things as they give her is wonderful to think on, and you liked the young man when he come up to see us." So Brown he says, "Go if you like."

I says, "You come too." Well, he didn't give in to that not at first, but I see as he meant for to do it, so got everythin' ready for him.

If ever there was a man as did credit to dress it's Brown, though aggravatin' at times in not a-wearin' what I wishes. As for myself, I've got lovely things as I had altered, and a new slate-coloured silk as made up very becomin', though I'm certain as that Mrs. Moffatt must 'ave took yards, a-sayin' as a gored skirt was equal to seven breadths, as is rubbish to look at.

They was to be married in Christmas week, and though I must say it's a time as I likes to be at home, we went off on the Thursday as the weddin' was to be Saturday. I got a Mrs. Wallis, a steady widder, for to come and keep house along with my Mary Ann, and set them both plenty to do for to fill up their time till the Tuesday night next, when I was to be back, but didn't say exactly.

I do think that a railway is reg'lar Bedlam broke loose, that I do ; for what with a-rushin' here and pushin' there I was pretty nigh drove mad, and Brown a-blowin' up, a-sayin', "Late as usual," through bein' that aggravatin', as he would go on first and wait for me, and then fly out because I waited outside for him, and nearly missed the train. I must say as them Great Western carriages is roomy, but there is no comfort in them, and if it hadn't been for the carpet-bag my legs would have been a-danglin' all the way. It's a mercy as I could sleep, or I don't think I could a-bore the journey, as was that long, though it didn't seem so, and only stopped once for refreshments as I didn't want, through havin' a basket with me. Bless you, when we got out of the train, as I was that stiff as I couldn't move, there was young Bumberry, as is a-goin' to marry my 'Liza, a-waitin' for us, and glad to see us.

"Where's my gal?" says I. "Oh, it's a good four miles yet," says he, "and I've got the trap, and the mare 'll do it in little more than twenty minutes."

"Will she?" says I; "then I won't trouble her;" for I know'd what that meant was upsets. "Oh," he says, "the roads is first-rate."

Well, by that time we was out of the station, and there stood a butcher's cart, the very identical to the one as killed Sammy Roberts in the Mile-end-road, as caused his mother's death, and both a-layin' in Stepney Churchyard to this very hour. He says, "I've got the lamps, and so he had, a couple of reg'lar glarers as I calls 'em; and there was the mare with her ears up, and lookin' after the train and a-snortin' for to keep it company, as is very like to terrify a dumb brute, as can't comprehend it, and however should they, for I'm sure if I'd been told as such things would have happened when I was a gal, I wouldn't never have believed it, as am not a dumb brute myself.

It's all very well to talk about country roads, but town's quite good enough for me, though certainly over the stones in a empty buss has shook me frightful before now; but of all the shaking as ever I got it was them Devonshire lanes, as was like drivin' through where the sewers is all up. I never did; I was all up one side one minute and down nowheres the next; it's lucky as I was wedged in tight between Brown and young Bumberry, or pitched out I know I should.

It was all very well along the road, but all of a sudden we turned into a lane as was a hill that steep like goin' down a ladder, for by the light of the lamps I could only see the animal's tail.

Young Bumberry was a-talkin' away cheerful like to Brown, when all of a sudden there came a jolt as

sent me up a-flyin' and down agin with that violence as caused somethin' for to go bump at the bottom of the cart. The mare give a sudden twist.

Says I, "We're done for." "Hold your row," says Brown.

"Help!" says I, for I felt myself a-goin' gradual. Out jumps young Bumberry sudden, as lightened the cart, and over I goes right into a quickset 'edge, as broke my fall, but tore me dreadful.

I should have been all very well if the top of the 'edge had been wide enough for to have held me, but, law bless you, in my struggles I rolled over the other side into a ditch, as was all slush and filth. I could hear young Bumberry a-hollarin' and the mare a-kick-in', and Brown a-usin' langwidge as made my blood run as cold as the water I was a-layin' in.

It was ever so long before they could make out where I was got to, and then, when they did find me, if Brown didn't set to and laugh like mad, and made that young Bumberry grin.

"Well," I says, "this is nice manners, this is. Whatever can there be to laugh at?" Says Brown, "No bones broke, old gal; but you are a cure to look at."

Says I, "It's a mercy I ain't a kill, and you with a widdered hearthstone to set at the rest of your days," though it's my opinion as he would settle agin. "Come," he says, "jump in; you'll get a chill."

"In where?" says I. "To the trap," says he.

"Never!" says I. "I'll walk if it's as far as Jericho." Says young Bumberry, "It's jest over a mile; but," he says, "if you'll get in, I'll lead the mare all the way."

"No," says I, "no more of your mares for me.

I can trust my legs, I know." So on we walked, Brown a-gettin' into the cart, as seemed to me to bump wuss than ever, and never was I more pleased than when we came to a white gate as young Bumberry opened, and give a holler, and up come in a minnit my gal.

I says, "My dear, don't come near me ; I'm a mud-cart for filth." And so I was, you never did. I says, "Take me in quiet where I can't be seen ;" but, law bless you, the place seemed full of men and boys, as had lanterns, and then come two young women with candles to the kitchen-door, as couldn't keep from smilin', though a-holdin' of their aprons to their mouths as though it struck cold.

Mrs. Bumberry is a motherly sort of woman, with a cap on as must have been her grandmother's. She would have me upstairs with hot water and all manner, and certainly a drop of mulled elder wine and a bit of dry toast did seem to bring the life into me.

I wouldn't go down no more that night, as was a comfortable bedroom, though the ceilin' low and white curtains in winter time has a chilly look.

I didn't have much of a night of it, through a-dreamin' constant as I was a-pitchin' out, and once pretty nearly did, a-pullin' Brown with me. In the mornin' I was that stiff and queer, with my legs a-achin', that Mrs. Bumberry she says, "You lay a-bed, Mrs. Brown," and so I did, but up for a cup of tea, as one or two neighbours dropped in for, but through not a-feelin' myself didn't set up for supper.

Well, the weddin' come off the next mornin' She was married from her place, and though I says it as shouldn't, looked as pretty as need be.

Certainly them young ladies was like sisters to her,

and treated me like a lady, and so did Mrs. Fuller, as is the lady's name, through bein' a minister's widow.

I didn't go to church—I never do ; for the only time as ever I did was to see a aunt of mine married, as turned out unlucky through him a-provin' to be married, and transported before through bigamy.

There was a pretty breakfast, and I should have been quite happy if I hadn't been so bruised about the shoulders ; not as it signified through not a-showin', and what the eye don't see the heart don't grieve for, not as that always holds good, for Miss Wittles, where I lived, had a wart atween her eyebrows over the nose as she couldn't ketch sight on, not even by squintin', yet never rested till extracted by the roots, as brought on fever and had a narrow squeak for it.

Things went off very pleasant, as did 'Liza and her husband, as I couldn't bring myselr to call John for ever so long, it seemed that free.

They went to spend a week down at his uncle's in Cornwall, as is a cripple through rheumatics, and would see them, as hasn't chick nor child, as the sayin' is, with a pretty property to leave.

We had a bit of a party the Saturday, then come Sunday, as was a quiet day, and Brown and me went to tea with Mrs. Fuller, as would have us, and said my gal was one in ten thousand, and made me cry for to hear her that praised.

It's all very well, of course, for them as is born to it, but as to marryin' into the country it wouldn't suit me, and if I'm not mistaken that Mrs. Bumberry is a temper. She's one of them worrets as won't let nothin' rest, though I must say I never see such a clean place, and so it ought to be with no blacks nor nothin' for to defame it.

For my part I'd rather have the blacks and the fogs in town than them roads, as I shall carry the marks on to my grave. But, bless you, them people down there don't seem to think no more of bein' pitched out of a cart than if it was nothin' ; but all I says is that London's good enough and big enough for me, and as to the country, it don't seem to have no bounds, and I dont care about it.

So I says to Brown, "Home a-Monday, if you please ;" and he says, "All right."

No. III.

Mrs. Brown returns from the Country.

I DON'T think as ever I felt more glad for anythin' than when I see that pony-shay draw up at Mrs. Bumberry's door Monday mornin', for to take us to the train, for I'd said to her, "Mrs. Bumberry, mum, you will excuse me, but get into your shay-cart agin I will not was it ever so." She says, "Mrs. Brown, it's not my intentions for to ask you, seein' as you broke the springs a-comin' and the mare is much knocked about."

I says, "As to your springs, they could not be much for to break like that; and I'm sure I never laid a finger on your mare, as is a wicious brute in my opinion, as will take human life some day with its wagaries, mark my words." She says, "I don't think as you knows much about horseflesh."

I says, "Probable not, through not a-bein' in the cat's-meat line," as shet her up pretty quick, and seemed for to sour her like, for she wasn't pleasant no more. I heard her with my own ears a-sayin' to the man as I must go to the rail the time as suited her, for she wasn't going to have her cattle dragged to death for nobody. So off I was by a little after nine, for Brown he would walk by the fields. I didn't break

my heart to wish that old skin and grief good-bye, as I hopes my gal will get on with.

I never did see such a hill as we went up; it's lucky as it was dark when we come down it, for I'm sure I should never have got to the bottom alive. As to that I didn't think as ever we should get up it, and I do believe as I should be there now stickin' in a rut if it hadn't been as a man as was ploughin' come and helped us out. I had to walk up nearly all the steepest part with a thick gownd, two shawls, and my velvet cape, let alone carryin' my bandbox, as had my new bonnet and cap in, as I couldn't trust in that shay, as everythin' kep' a-tumblin' out on, and that's the way as my umbrella come to be missin', for the way that pony took that shay up the hill were surprisin', he kep' a-walkin' zig-zag like and over heaps as turned everythin' out twice.

It's a mercy as I was walkin', or I should have been pitched out over and over agin on that hill, and there wasn't nothin' for to keep you from rollin' from bottom to top. I never see such foolishness not a-cuttin' it down, as is growed up out of all reason for a thoroughfare, but what can you expect from them poor half-starved creeturs with nine shillings a week for eight to live on. Why, I calls it murder, and so it is, whatever they may say, and wonders the poor stands it, when I see some of them grand houses where the squires lives, with their 'osses and their 'ounds a-tearing all over the place arter a poor bit of a fox, as might be shot easy like a dog, and was nearly my death, as we come upon 'em in a lane in their red coats and shoutin' like mad, and them 'ounds like wild beastes, and a fellow come slap over the 'edge, 'oss and all, that mudded as was disgraceful.

I says, "Well, if you was come over my place like that I'd make you pay for it;" for I was a-restin' by a gate just as they come on me all of a bounce just as I was a-sayin' a few words to a old party as was breakin' stones, though seventy-nine, not as I could make out much as he said through never havin' been taught to speak proper, as however could he in that outlandish place; but, bless you, he seemed to be quite pleased at the sight of them 'unters and their 'ounds, and began a-shoutin' too.

It's a mercy as we wasn't both tore to bits, for however should them dogs know whether you're a fox or a Christian, as the sayin' is. When they was gone I was all of a-tremble for the pony, shay, and the boy as was drivin', but law, the boy if he didn't climb up a tree, and keep a-watchin' them 'unters ever so far. So I says, "We shall miss the train." He says, "That you won't," a-grinnin'.

Well, we got on pretty well arter that to the station, and if we hadn't got a hour and a-half to wait, as I calls downright shameful in Mrs. Bumberry, as the boy said did it a-purpose through wantin' of him back. You never see such a station; nothin' but a shed to set under outside and a thorough draft inside through the fire bein' between two doors, as was opened constant.

The boy he went back in course, and wherever Brown had got to I couldn't think; it was only just ten, and the train wasn't till a quarter to twelve.

I don't think as ever I was so uncomfortable, for, though not cold, it was raw and damp, as my feet was likewise, through a-walkin' so much.

I asks the young man for the refreshments, as only stared and said somethin' as nobody could make out.

I'd enough to do for to keep my eyes on my packages, as I kep' a-fancyin' wasn't all right, and was that chilled I didn't know what to do.

It was just half-past eleven when Brown turned up all of a-glow, sayin' as he'd had a delightful walk, and had fell in with the 'ounds.

I says, "It's a mercy you're alive for to tell the tale; for I'm sure it would have been my death to have fell in with them, it was quite enough to see and hear 'em," as made Mr. Giles, as is Mrs. Bumberry's brother, bust out a-laughin', as he'd been and walked with Brown for to show him the country, as I'm sure is plain enough for any one to see without no showin', and no great sight arter all, only there's a deal too much on it to be pleasant, as wants buildin' over, and how they gets on without gas or pavin'-stones I can't think. So Mr. Giles he says, "We must have you down here in the summer, Mrs. Brown, we'll show you life."

I says, "I thank you kindly, but summer wouldn't never suit me down here with no shady side of the way, and dust as must poison, and all along them pebbly paths. I couldn't walk was it ever so."

I'm glad as the train was a-startin', for I was dyin' for a drop of somethin' for to take the chill off me, and Brown had got a wickerwork bottle in his pocket.

The drop as I took made me feel more comfortable certainly, and on we went for to ketch the train at Exeter, where I wanted refreshments, as wasn't possible through being late, and the train for London a-waitin'.

We did stop everywhere, but only once for ten minutes, and I got a cup of tea with a bit of cold beef; but just as I had took a sip if they didn't ring a bell, and

we was all hurried back to the train, and got in ; but, bless you, we, did'nt start for quite long enough for me to have swallowed my tea, as I had to pay for, with nothin' but one mouthful of beef and a bit of bread and butter, and obligated for to take a little out of the wicker-work bottle.

It was just on eight when we got to the station, and I do think the cab home was the wust of the journey, though glad to see London agin. When we got to our door the cabman he gave a ring, and I says, "Let me out," and give a look up at the house nat'ral. "Well, to be sure," I says, "they've got gas enough, as I suppose is hard at work a-clearin' up, as will always put things off till the last, and not expectin' me home till the Tuesday."

As they did'nt answer the bell I walks up the steps to the front door, and hears 'em a-singin' and a stampin' like a madhouse. So I ups and gives a knock at the door that loud as soon stopped their singin', and then a voice says, "Who's there?"

I says, "Open the door this moment;" but I only heard a scufflin' So I says to Brown, "Just see if that kitchen-winder's fastened," as it did not prove to be, so he throwed it up, and was in in a instant, and opens the kitchen-door for me. So I bustles up the stairs and meets Mrs. Wallis full butt, as was that far gone in liquor enough to knock you down.

I says, "Whatever is the meanin' of such goin's-on?" She only gives a scream and tumbles candle and all for'ard on to me, and if Brown hadn't been a-follerin' close behind would have swep' me down the kitchen-stairs. So I gives her a shove as made her get out of my way, and walks into my parlours, as was a sight, for if there wasn't three fellars in clay pipes, and

one layin' on the sofa, as was the pot-boy, and two other parties, one elderly, as the sayin' is, and Mary Ann, as busts out a screamin', and sayin' as it warn't her doin', but all Mrs. Wallis and only her mother.

I'm sure the sight of that room and the company give me that turn as I couldn't get no words out till I heard Brown a-orderin' them fellars for to step it.

At last I says, "Mary Ann Topsett," as were her name, "leave this house you do this night; and if it is only your mother she can take you;" and then the old lady begun for to beg and pray, but I says, "Be off with the whole lot. Send for your things in the mornin' "

As to Mrs. Wallis, she'd stept it somehow, I rather think through the pot-boy, as was her nephew.

It nearly broke my heart to see what they'd been and used, to say nothin' of wreck and ruin, and my bright copper kettle full on the fire burnt as black as a coal, and the things as was on the table you never did, black puddins and sprats, with baked potatoes and beef sausages, with odds and ends, and the smell of rum and baccy frightful. Well, it give me such a turn as I couldn't touch nothin' but a crust with somethin' warm.

I says, "Brown, look round as all is safe, and let's get to bed," and so we did.

I must have been fast asleep through being tired when I hears a hammerin' as woke me up. Up I jumps, thinkin' it was that lot come back. I goes to the winder, and heard the hammerin' a-goin' on, and sees a policeman lookin' up.

So I goes to the door and says, "Whatever is it?" Says he, "I don't think it's thieves, but it's in your house."

Well, we listens, and sure enough it was down below. So I lets in the policeman and he goes to the cellar, as Brown had bolted up tight, and if there wasn't Mrs. Wallis, as had slep' off her liquor on the coals, and woke up not a-knowin' where she was, as had took refuge there in her fright at seein' me.

So I give the policeman a glass of somethin', and sent him home with the old faggot, as shan't never darken my doors agin; but I will say as them as has homes didn't ought to leave them.

No. IV.

Mrs. Brown on the State of the Streets.

TALK about weather, I never did in all my born days know nothin' like what it was the week afore last; you're froze up one moment and all of a glow the next.

As to this house as we're a-living in, they calls it simmy detached, as it's my opinion they was obliged to build it up again next door, or it never would have stood by itself, as is not much stronger than a egg-shell, as the sayin' is. The draught under that kitchen-door it was as give it me, the cold as I've got, for I felt it all the while as I was a-makin' that weal and ham pie, as is a thing as Brown's partial to, and I makes it myself with a flaky crust, though some will have it as a short one is right, which in my opinion goes best with fruit. As to puttin' a bit of bad butter in pie-crust it's my idea of a sin as is downright filthy to the taste and unwholesome to a delicate stomach like Brown's, though you wouldn't think it to look at him, but no one knows where the shoe pinches but them as is bilious, as the sayin' is.

I certainly did feel a chill, and pr'aps it might have been through them dratted boys as I give twopence

each to for to clear away the snow. As a fellow comes round with a paper, as he said was the westry's orders as I should clean up the front of my house.

I says, "Then I'll thank the westry for to turn out and clean the road for me, as I can't get across not if it was to save my life, through bein' ankle deep, and poor Mrs. Atkins that bad as I wanted for to go to, through me havin' promised and only the corner of the street." So he says, "You may be carried across easy on a barrow," as I see meant jeers.

So I says, "When I wants to be carried I'll get a steady donkey, and pr'aps you might be handy." "Well," says he, "I should recommend a dromedary."

I wasn't a-going to waste my time a-talkin' to such as him, all the more as I felt a-creepin' all down my back, as is a sure sign of chills with me, as has throwed me on a sick bed afore now, and was the death of poor old Mrs. Thornley, as kept the "Blue Lion" in Horselydown, and never recovered a-fallin' asleep one Saturday night whilst a-soakin' her feet, and never woke till they was froze hard in the foot-pan through the cold bein' that violent below zero as froze the Thames up with a ox roasted whole, as I've heard my dear mother say was shameful waste, through the roughs a-tearin' of it to bits in their open hands though blue and quivery, as is not wholesome in my opinion, though it should be done with the gravy in, as gives proper nutriment.

It was that same winter as them Russians brought on for to freeze up Bonyparty, as is their ways, the same as they did in the Crime-year, where poor Mrs. Elkins lost two sons with their frozen limbs, and the eldest fell at Balyclava, and would never have

got up through bein' that benumbed if it hadn't been as he was found accidental, but neither of them ever strong men again, as you wouldn't think the loss of a foot could reduce anybody so much as that.

Well, as I was sayin', I give them boys twopence a-piece, and lent them the fire-shovel for to scrape off them frozen lumps, as is that dangerous, as well I've known through a-treadin' on one, as twisted my ankle and down I went, and shouldn't have minded so much if it hadn't been for poor old Mr. Gibbins next door but two, as had stepped out for the beer his-self and two new-laid eggs, though I should say no more new-laid than I am, as meant egg-hot.

Well, he had the beer in one hand and the eggs in the other, with a white worsted comforter and long ends, as he did ought to have tucked in somewhere, but left a-hangin'. He was a-walkin' along by my side, a-remarkin' about the weather and such like, when I treads on the bit of frozen snow, and nat'rally clutches at anythin' for to save myself, and as bad luck would have it, seized hold of his ends of his comforter, and give him that drag as his 'eels slipped from under him, though list round his bluchers, as didn't prove no protection. Up goes his hand with the beer all in my face and blinds me, but I heard a crash, and there he was a-welterin' in his new-laid eggs, and a-sayin' as his back was broke.

So I says, "Kick, 'cos if you can kick your back's all right," and kick he did, and he had no occasion for to ketch me on the shin so violent, me a-stoopin' for to help him up, a-feelin' grateful to him for breakin' my fall, as the sayin' is, but he kep' his bed for weeks.

So I gives the boys the fire-shovel, and the gal she

lent 'em a broom, as we never see neether on 'em no more through her a-payin' of them without seein' to my property, and then sauced me by a-sayin' as it was a ricketty old thing.

Altogether it was a miserable day, and I didn't care for my dinner, it was a bit of hash mutton and a yeast dumplin', as is a light thing if made proper, but cut with a knife is lead all over.

So when I was tidied up I says, "Mary Ann, I'm only a-goin' as far as Mrs. Atkins, and shall be in to tea most likely, but certain by eight; and," I says, "mind as you puts the pie to cool the minit as the baker brings it, as is a thing as I don't hold with hot."

I started off well wrapped up, for I know'd I should have to walk ever so far up the road for to cross, as is like all them new-made places, all clay and broken crockery with ashes mixed for to bind, and the snow and slush that frightful as made you tremble for to think of fallin' into it.

I got to the corner all right and safe, where is the "Risin' Sun," as keeps Cobb's Margate ale, as I'm partial to, with a bit of bread and cheese for lunch, though too heady for a full meal.

I got across half-way, when I hears a hollow dead lump on the ground behind me, and felt as I was splashed dreadful, then come a lump in front, and a lump it was of snow as come right straight from the top of the "Risin' Sun." Talk of driven snow, why it was as black as Newgate.

I was just a-stoppin', thinkin' as I'd put up my umbrella, when if a whole shovelful didn't come right a-top of me, and if it hadn't been as the pot-boy was close to me, I should have been felled like an ox, as the sayin' is.

I was of that tremble from head to foot as took all that young man's strength for to hold me up, and when I got to Mrs. Atkins I'm sure my legs was a-givin' way under me, and from the crown of my bonnet to the bottom of my dress I was one stream of suttly snow, as had come half melted from the "Risin' Sun."

It's lucky as I hadn't put on my welwet mantle, as I can't walk under through heat, or it would have been ruined.

I no sooner see that infant of Mrs. Atkins than I says to the nurse, "'Ave it christened, for," I says, "hours is the word." "Oh," she says, "that's done, thank you, mum," quite short, a-addin' as she know'd her duties, and didn't want no one to tell her the difference atween a new-born babe and blind kittens, as the pail and mop would settle easy.

So I says, "Mrs. Topsett, mum," as were her name, through bein' mother of that owdacious gal of mine as had the party through my back bein' turned, with everythin' pretty nigh ruined in the settin'-room, I says, "Mrs. Topsett, it is not my 'abits to interfere nowheres; but," I says, "Mrs. Atkins, you'll excuse me for sayin' that while there's life there's hopes, as the sayin' is, and if that was a child of mine it's brandy as I should give."

Mrs. Topsett flounced about, a-talkin' about old-fashioned ways, whereas she'll never see fifty-five no more herself. So I didn't say no more, but spoke serious to Mrs. Purdy, as is mother to Mrs. Atkins, and both agreed as brandy was the word, and the doctor a-comin' in highly approved.

Bless you, the temper as that Mrs. Topsett showed far gone in liquor as there couldn't be no doubt, for

we'd hardly got tea over when she bounces up and says she won't stop in a house where old faggits comes a-interferin' for to poison a innocent babe with their own liquors, illudin' in course to me and the brandy.

Poor Mrs. Atkins, that weak as she were, plucked up a sperrit to say as she might leave, "For," says she, "mother, you'll stop, and that good soul, Mrs. Brown, will look in occasional."

"I wish you joy of the lot," says Mrs. Topsett; "a old thing as couldn't get across the road without the pot-boy through rollin' in the kennel, as is a disgrace."

I wouldn't have no words afore Mrs. Atkins, but I says, "Mrs. Topsett, I'll say a word with you down-stairs." Out she walks, me a-follerin' I gets her into the passage, as is a wizened old scarecrow, and there I found the street-door open. So I just takes her by the scuff of the neck afore she know'd where she were, and walked my lady out as nice as ninepence, as the sayin' is.

If she did fall down the steps it wasn't my fault, as the policemen said as picked her up, through bein' that far gone in drink, as she couldn't say where she lived, and was took to the station-house till sober, and it's my opinion as the infant will thrive after all; but the cold as I caught was a caution, as you don't ketch me out in the snow agin if I knows it.

No. V.

Mrs. Brown on Omnibuses.

THEY certainly are public conveniences, as is what omnibus means I've heard say; but I'm sure if you gets it one way you loses it another, for of all the beastly things to get into dressed decent it's one or 'em.

I was a-goin' to spend the day last week with Mrs. Elkins, as lives near 'Averstock-'ill, and is a party I've been bekown to this many a year, through her havin' a sister as was lady's-maid in a family where I know'd the upper housemaid as I took tea with frequent.

I started in good time, and got into the Clapham 'bus, as is what I calls genteel and empty in the general way, except when them parties is a-comin' home to dinner from their business, as is from four to six, and crowded in the mornins. In the middle of the day they're well nigh took up with ladies, as in my opinior isn't always agreeable company in a 'bus, for what with the fuss as they makes about their skirts bein' set-on, and some wantin' the winders up and others down, as I owes my stiff neck to a fantastical old cat as was snug up in the corner out of the draught, and let the winder down into my right ear, and was down-

right rude through me a-objecting, as I says, "Change places if you like the draught, and have it in welcome, as don't suit me."

I was set down at the Elephant and Castle, and if you'd seen the mud scraped all up along the side of the path, reg'lar batter puddin', as the sayin' is, and that deep as I was up to my ancle in no time. If there is a thing as I hates it's mud, as will stick, as the sayin' is. Them Elephant and Castle 'busses is very frequent, so I didn't wait long; but law, they're nearly as muddy as the roads. So I says, "Conductor, why ever don't you keep it cleaner, as is a reg'lar dunghill for straw and mud?" "Well," says he, "you muds it yourself; look at your boots," which was more than I could do just then without a-kickin' the parties as was opposite, so I didn't say no more.

It was one of them muggy warm days, and I was pretty warm clothed through not havin' quite shook off my cold, and I'd on my new velvet bonnet, as a bit of wire ribbon inside would keep a-workin' into my head, as was worretin' me. We hadn't gone far when in gets a couple of young gals with hats, as looked that bold as I don't hold with, and I'm sure the way as they showed their stockin's a-workin' of their way up that 'bus through their crinolines a-stickin' out behind I never did.

I says, "For mercy sake put her gownd down for her," to the other gal, a-speakin' low; "for, my dear, she didn't ought to show her legs like that." She busts out a-laughin' and says, "Why not? They're her own," that loud as give me quite a turn, and if they hadn't been and mudded my dress and velvet cape dreadful through a-drawin' their drabble-tail dresses all over me.

I was put out and says, "I thinks as you might learn to get in decent." Says one on 'em, "Who are you callin' indecent?" Says the other, "You're a nice one to complain with such boots on as that. Why, you've been a-runnin' of a race ain't you?" and then all the other parties grinned.

I says, "Conductor, put me down the nearest to the 'Ampstead-road." He said, "Here you are at Charin'-cross," though a old gentleman did say Regency Circus, but as I didn't care partickler about my company I got out. But, bless you, Charin'-cross was a reg'lar wilderness to me, that confusin' with 'buses a-tearin' here and there and everywhere, let alone cabs and carts by the score, and I don't think as ever I should have got across the street but for a little boy as was a-crossin'-sweeper, and took me all through the dirt. When I'd give him a penny I looks out for the 'bus as I wanted, and at last I see 'Averstock'-ill, as I know'd it was my way. So I stops it and gets in, but the stiflin' hole as it was quite took my breath away, partickler as parties wouldn't move up, but I was obliged for to struggle up to the very top, and reg'lar stove in the crown of my bonnet agin the lamp as was there, and proved a leak all over my bonnet and dripped on to my cape.

As to settin' down I didn't, but was wedged in the corner and helpless as a infant, and the party settin' opposite says, "You ladies with your crinolines did ought to have 'busses made for you." I says, "beggin' of your pardon, there ain't a stitch of crinoline about me, as any one may see by the set of my gownd;" and another chap says, "If you was to wear crinoline there ain't no livin' doorway as you'd get in at." I was just a-goin' to give him his answer when the 'bus

stops and out every one gets. "Railway," says the conductor.

"Where's 'Averstock-'ill?" says I. "Why, you've come from it," says he. "Why didn't you tell me that afore?" says I. "You never asked me," says he. "You might have been sure as I wasn't goin' to the railway through havin' no luggage," says I. He only laughs and says, "There's a 'bus off for 'Amstead-road now, as is your way."

It was as much as ever I could do to get that 'bus to stop, and when I did get into it I was that bad in my breath as I couldn't hardly speak. There was only three in at first as was a mercy, but it very soon filled up, and of all the rough lots as ever I see they was some of them the roughest; not but there was genteel parties, partickler two, as I took for ladies at first, but proved nothin' better than females in the long run, as smelt of liquor though a-disguisin' of it in lemon peel as they was a-chewin'.

I says to one on 'em as squeezed herself in atween me and the door, "Pr'aps you wouldn't mind a-settin' off my lap." She was very polite I must say, and says, "Excuse me, through not bein' used to these conveniences, as I only takes through fears of cabmen, as is that insolent as I dare not trust."

I says, "Right you are, for I'm sure it's not more than six months ago as I had a cab under a mile and a half, and through not havin' a shillin' 'andy give him half-a-crown and says, 'Give me change,' if he didn't jump on his box and say, 'I'll drive you for nothin' next time, old gal,' and off he goes at a gallop." "Yes," says the lady the other side, "and I'm sure I left a Ingy shawl in one as cost sixty guineas and never see it no more. So one is safer in a 'bus."

I says, "Whatever do they mean by a-writin' up 'Beware of pickpockets?'" So the one lady laughed and says, "Any one as can't take care of their pockets must be green."

But a elderly party opposite said, "It's best to look out, for my daughter-in-law had her pocket picked of her pension a-comin' from receivin' it, as was all she had to look to with three small children and her a widow, through him havin' been in the navy, and lost his life in the discharge of his duty on the west coast of Africa."

Well, poor soul, she was a-tellin' me a deal about her troubles, as was certainly heavy through havin' a husband in his bed near upon two years, and herself a-sufferin' with lumbago, so I didn't take much notice of them females a-gettin' out, as one did very short after the other; for I did feel for that poor old soul as had been to see her grandson, as was run over in the Westminster 'Ospital, where they did ought to be more careful round the corners, as takes any one nat'rally by surprise, and them boys is that wentersome. We was the last in the 'bus that party and me, and when we gets out I says, "How much?" "Fourpence," says he, "and please look sharp as I wants my tea."

I says, "And so do I." I says, "Wherever is my puss? Why, if it ain't gone. No, here it is in the other pocket, as I could have swore I'd put in the right hand." I opens it, and if there wasn't nothin' in it, as I'd put in eight shillin's when I come out, and a lucky sixpence as I always keeps there. Well, I was that flurried I didn't know what to do. The coachman kep' a-hollarin', the conductor sayin', "Look alive," I didn't know what to do, and if I

hadn't to borrow fourpence of that elderly party, as lived close by where I was a-goin'. It's a mercy as I met with her, and she said as she was sure them two females as got out, a-pretendin' to be unbeknown to each other, was the thieves. The conductor he says as he know'd 'em.

Then says I, "Why not tell any one?" "Oh! ah!" says he "that's likely. It's stuck up in the 'bus," and off he goes.

How I got to Mrs. Elkins I don't know, I was that tired; and if she hadn't gone out for the day and not expected home to sleep. It's lucky as her servant know'd me well and had silver in the 'ouse, as enabled me for to give that poor old soul as had come out of her way with me a shillin'

Mrs. Elkins' servant, as is indeed her niece, as I don't consider relations a good plan in them compacities, she give me a cup of tea, for it was past five when I got there, and me a-leavin' home just on two. I was dead beat, and afraid for to take off my boots for fear as I might not be able for to get them on agin, havin' a foot apt to swell up like dough.

I did take off my bonnet, and got rid of that wire as 'Liza snipped off with the scissors, and must have cut through somethin' too far, for when I got home the back of my bonnet was clean out.

When I was a little bit rested 'Liza went with me to the 'buss, as was the one I did ought to have come by, a Waterloo, as runs by the end of the street, and glad I was to get into it empty. I had two shillins of her. I don't think as I remembers anythin' clear after she wished me good night, for I dropped off, not as I'd taken more than a table-spoonful in a little warm water, as was poor weak stuff, as we got

at the tavern when we was waitin' for the 'bus. I never woke till we'd got to Camberwell-gate, as I did ought to have got out at the Elephant and Castle for to get the Clapham 'bus. Out I gets, and gives the conductor a shillin' "Hallo?" says he, "this won't do."

"What won't do?" says I. "Why this here shillin'," says he, "it's a duffer." "A what, says I?" "A bad un," says he.

I says, "I'm sure 'Liza Martin never give me a bad shillin'." "You took it, pr'aps, at the public where you was a-drinkin' when I took you up," says he, with a sneer.

I says, "It's my opinion as I never give it you." Says he, "If you say much more I'll give you in charge for smashin' "

I says, "Take your money," and gives him the other shillin' I says, "Wherever is there a cab?" "Here you are," says a cabby, as was standin' there wacant. In I got and home I goes more dead than alive, with every rag of clothes smothered in mud, and that cabman wantin' half-a-crown, not as Brown paid him; but I says, "I don't go out often, and I'd rather stop at home for ever than go through them 'busses agin, as is ruination to your clothes and destruction to your health."

No. VI.

Mrs. Brown on the Poor.

DON'T talk to me they didn't ought to have done it, as is a downright disgrace, that it is, the way as the poor is treated, and talk about Christians, why the Jews beats 'em hollow at it, as I've been over their hospital myself, though in course bein' rich as a Jew, as the sayin' is, they can afford the money; not as Christians hasn't to pay, for I'm sure them rates makes my blood boil that they do, always a-comin' in, as I says the other day to the party as come round for to collect it, I says, "However is it as we don't buy the poor off, for I'm sure we gives 'em money enough. It's my opinion as they never gets one-tenth of it, and however should they when you sees the way as parties lives as has the fingerin' on it.

I'm sure them Gregories, as is one of the guardians, goes out of a Sunday that dressed out as nobody can't say where it comes from, and I says to Brown, "There goes our rates and taxes;" as said, "You'd better not let that red rag o' yourn run so free, or you'll hear about it."

But as I was a-sayin' them poor is treated wuss than Israelites; for I'd rather be a brick-burner myself

than shut up in that workus, as is a prison all over for all their whitewash and scrubbin'. And the way they would make that poor old soul, Mrs. Challin, go in when she'd a-lived content on eighteenpence a-week, as had a stepson as paid her rent, as much as he could do, though not her own flesh and blood, with a wife and six his-self, and only eighteen shillins and sixpence a-comin' in, through bein' a policeman, as is hard work with them rough characters, and that nightwork as tells on the constitution in time.

What I looks at is reason as did ought for to be considered in everythin', for however can they keep any one for eighteenpence a-week even in the workus, and as to partin' man and wife as had lived together over forty years, it's a sin, that it is.

I'm sure the way as that poor old soul, Mrs. Challin cried when I went to see her nearly broke my heart, that it did. Her little room that full of things, through havin' been decent off in her days, with a old bureau, as wouldn't fetch nothin', and a tent bedstead as filled up the place ; but law, she set store on 'em, and said as she couldn't bear for to see her home broke up, and a little pallis it was for cleanness.

She says, " You've been a kind friend to me, Mrs. Brown ; in fact, I may say a mother to me," as is twenty years my elder if she's a day, but law, she didn't mean it.

She says to me, " I've been comfortable I have, through livin' in service many a year, and what with savin' and a trifle as was left me by missis, as I lived with over fifteen year, I thought as I should do well."

I heard her say as she married Challin, as were a widower with a son and daughter, as was good children to her ; but she, poor girl, married, and went out to

them wild parts, and was shipwrecked, and her poor father never held his head up after, and died in that very tent bed as his wife nussed him through till the last.

She was a-sayin' as she did the same by her little Sammy, her only child as were his father's idol, "For," says she, "I often said, 'Challin,' I says, 'you makes too much on him,' and so he did, as was only five when he sickened for the measles and was gone in a week, and then poor Challin says to me, 'Sarah, you're right; I thought too much of that boy, and I've grieved too much for my poor gal as is in the bottomless deep; but,' he says, 'I'll try and bear up better now.' And so he did, poor dear, though it weren't for long, as jaunders proved fatal to, and then I was alone."

I do think as she might a-got on pretty well if she hadn't been persuaded to go into the chandlery line, and give thirty pounds for the business, and the agent, as was a swindler no doubt, said, "As the party as had gone out was independent through makin' a fortune, though only in it nine years." But she told me of all the rubbish as ever there was in that shop she never could have believed; and what with them as she give credit to never payin' her, and them as had money not a-dealin' with her, she didn't get on, let alone the thievin', "For," she says, "I've known them come in for a red herrin' on tick and steal the bundles of wood in their aprons, as was in a heap in front of the counter, as they'd take, and me only turned round to serve 'em."

Then, poor thing, she was sold up and took to charin', and come to know me, and have managed for to have her home about her till her legs give way. "And," says she, "I've managed for to crawl up to

the house, as was nearly my death, a-waitin' hour after hour for to see the board in a wind as was cuttin' me in half, and then to be told by a man as rides in his carriage, as is only a carcase butcher after all, as the shillin' a-week and a loaf must be withdrawn, as had paid rates and taxes five-and-thirty years in the parish when that fellow was only a butcher-boy a-drivin' of a cart without a hat, as got up in the world through a-marryin' his master's widow, and his own father and mother workin' people, the father on the road and the mother at the washtub."

"Ah!" as I says to Mrs. Challin, "them's the parties as is hard on the poor, as I've often know'd it's the beggar a horse-back as rides you knows where." For there was them very Flemings, as holds their heads up that high in the leather line, as you'd a-thought as Stepney Church wasn't big enough for, a-settin' that grand in their big pew, lined through with their red baize and brass nails, I remembers well nobodies, as was glad to run a errand for a halfpenny, and then to come the bounce and talk about not encouragin' idleness, and denyin' of his own sister the necessities of life.

So I told him when he come to my place for to ask how it were that his name had been mentioned by me to the parish doctor.

I says, "And why ever shouldn't your name be mentioned? Ain't she your own sister? And what if she did marry a bad character, he ain't the only one," a-lookin' hard at him. "Now," I says, "you've put my blood up, you good-for-nothin' fellow," I says, "do you want for to be exposed?"

He turned a sort of lead colour, and said as he defied all lyin' tongues.

I says, "Oh! indeed, no doubt; but," I says, "pr'aps you remembers the name of Relfe—'Liza Relfe, I means. Now," I says, "if you don't do that as is right by your own flesh and blood, as I've know'd you neglect shameful before now, I tell you what I'll do—I'll just step into your good lady and tell her all I knows, so that's all about it."

Ashes was his colour, a mean wretch, and his lips that liver colour, as he said he'd dare me to.

I says, "You'd better think a little," through knowin' as he was mortal afraid of his wife, as had twenty thousand pounds to her fortune, through bein' a tanner's daughter over in Bermondsey, as had threatened to leave him more than once. At last he says, "I ain't goin' to be bullied by my sister."

I says, "Bullied, poor soul, a-layin' in her bed, and not the strength for to dress herself, as a very few weeks must see the end on." "Well," he says, "I'll allow her five shillins a-week, and here's a month in advance; but mind, I ain't a-goin' to be troubled at home." I says, "All right; as long as you keeps to your word I don't trouble you, and I'm sure your sister won't."

So I didn't mind, as I'd got somethin' out of him, and off he went; but I know'd it would come home to him, and so it did, for his eldest son, as the mother made a fool on, went to the bad, and married a party as there wasn't no puttin' up with, and his only gal died in a consumption, and when last I saw him he was bein' lifted into his carriage, as all his money wouldn't give him back the use of his limbs as rheumatics had settled in.

So what I says is that the poor did ought to be naged different, and not by a parcel of flinty-hearted

wagabonds, as I considers them guardians, and talkin' about keepin' down the rates is rubbish, for I'm sure we pays all the same, and I do think if real gentlemen was to be guardians, and not a lot of twopenny green-grocers in the parish, it would be better.

But as for makin' every one come into the house, it's downright foolishness, as is a thing I don't hold with, that's what I says.

No. VII.

Mrs. Brown on Libel.

To my dyin' day I never shall forget what my feelins was when I got that lawyer's letter, a-sayin' as I was to be persecuted for a label.

I says, "It can't be, never," though me and Mrs. Elkins made it out so to read; but when Brown come in he says, "You're only subpened for a witness."

Whatever he meant I can't say, though it were a action agin Mrs. Portlock for defamement agin Mrs. Hardrup's character, as is a party as I never would have let-to myself, but Mr. Portlock did, through her a-comin' up sudden with him in a cab, as I see was a seafarin' man through a seal-skin cap and a short pipe out of the cab window. For it so 'appened I was a-puttin' up a clean blind to the parlor winder just as they come up, and so couldn't help a-seein' of them, not as I said nothin' then, but had my opinions.

I'm sure the bother as that trial were was enough for to wear any one down to the grave. How them judges can have the patience for to set and listen to all the rubbish as is talked afore 'em puzzles me.

But what I could not stand, if I was a judge, would

be a lot of them common jurymen a-'avin' the impudence for to fly slap in my face and findin' not guilty when I said as it were contrariwise. A parcel of fellows as to look at you'd say didn't know great A from a chest of drawers, as the sayin' is. There they was a-settin', a-pretendin' to look that wise, as I could hardly keep from laughin'.

Old Boddy, the broker, as called his-self foreman, and Lucas, as is in the grocery line, a reg'lar old fool, as daren't say a word at home without his wife's leave, as no doubt she'd told him how he was to wote afore ever he come out, as she does every Easter Tuesday a-electin' of the parish officers. I should like to see him a-darin' to go agin her.

I don't believe as them men know'd what was bein' said, and as to their bein' put over the judge, it's enough to make a cat laugh.

I was kep' a-waitin' about them courts three days afore our trial come on till I got that used to it that I do think as I could try anythin' myself.

The day as our trial were on I never see anythin' like the wet, and that court a-smellin' of damp umbrellas as was sickenin'. How them poor dear judges can bear theirselves with their hot headdresses and fur I can't think.

I was of a pretty twitter I can tell you when I got in the box for to swear, but through a-knowin' manners made my obedience to the judge, as didn't seem to see me, as I've heard say is their ways, through bein' supposed to be blind in their judgments, as is, of course, right; and I think as that judge as I were before must have been deaf too, though, pr'aps it was only his wig over his ears as made him so, like my own Aunt Pembley, as was run over by a light wan through

wearin' of a beaver bonnet tied tight down over her ears, as made her a perfect post for hearin', and as to its bein' a light wan it was heavy enough to break both her arms as the wheels went over, and if that judge don't mind he'll be run over as sure as ever he walks out in that wig, as I'd a good mind for to tell him.

Well, one of them lawyers he got up with his wig and a slobberin' bib under his chin, as must be useless, for he's done dribblin' by this time, and hasn't got no white fur for to save like that judge, as bein' well on in life may slobber, for once a man twice a child, as the sayin' is. So that lawyer he looks at me very hard, and asks me if I know'd the nature of a oath?

"Well," I says, "that depends; for I've heerd some oaths as sounds downright sinful," I says, "and I've know'd a party as would say one and not mean it, like a party as I once know'd, as were a minister, and yet said 'damn it' in haste through a-burnin' hisself with the handle of the kettle in givin' water to the lady as was makin' tea at a serious party; and wouldn't have him though he went down on his bended knees for pardon, through her havin' thirty thousand pounds, as was forty herself if a hour, and as plain a woman as you'd see in a day's walk. So I says, "I don't hold with swearin', as is a seafarin' habit, and pr'aps they can't make theirselves heard in them ragin' winds without it; but," I says, "swear in cold blood's disgraceful."

"Now," says the lawyer, "will you swear?" I says, "Never!"

He says, "Be quiet." I says "With pleasure."

"Now," he says, "on your oath did Mrs. Portlock ever tell you that Mrs. Hardrup was no better

than she ought to be?" "Them never was her words," I says; "and if they had been I should have said——"

"Never mind what you would have said." "But I do mind," says I, "for I'm one of them as keeps my 'ands from pickin' and stealin', and my tongue——"

"Oh, that'll do," says he. "Yes," I says, "I knows it will; but," I says, "it's a pity as more don't keep to it."

So the judge he said somethin' It's my opinion he'd be 'avin' of a nap for he seemed fractious in his ways, as I've know'd infants on wakin'.

The lawyer was quite put out with his words, for he turns on me quite savage and says, "Now no more nonsense, if you please, Mrs. Brown, answer my questions?" I says, "By all means; but," I says, "you'll excuse me, but I'm not the party as talks nonsense."

So he says, "You were drinkin' tea with Mrs. Portlock on Wednesday evenin', November the 7th, were you not?" I says, "Never!"

"He says, what day was it?" "Can't say."

He says, "Can't you? well, then, I'll help your memory. Do you remember meetin' Mrs. Walby and Mrs. Shaw at tea in November last at Mrs. Portlock's?" "Yes, I do," says I, "but not on a Wednesday."

"Well," he says, "no matter." I says, "Pr'aps not to you, but it do to me, for it's Brown's club night, and if he was to read in the papers as I was out of a Wednesday it might cause words."

So the lawyer he says, "What was the subject of your conversation?" I says, "Let me see, as far as I can remember me and Mrs. Shaw was a-talkin' about

her unmarried daughter as was delicate. So I says if she was a daughter of mine——”

“We don’t want to hear about such things,” says he. “I thought not,” I says, “though it seemed as you did by askin’, though I was surprised I must say.”

“Did you ever hear Mrs. Portlock say anythin’ about Mrs. Hardrup?” “Yes, I did.”

“What did she say?” “Why she said that Mrs. Hardrup was very poor, and she did believe as she often would not have broke her fast if it hadn’t been as she took her up a bit of somethin’ with a cup of tea.”

“What did she say about her character?” “Why she said as she’d took her in without one, it was too late to ask about it.”

“Why did she take her in without a character?” “Why, because in her circumstances she must have gone to the workus, and the man as was with her begged so hard.”

“Who was the man?” says he. “That’s best known to Mrs. Hardrup; but through me not a-knowin’ cannot say.”

Then the judge he bust out agin, and the lawyers looked puzzled. Another one gets up and says to me, “You never heard Mrs. Portlock say a word agin Mrs. Hardrup?” I says, “Never, for there wasn’t no occasion.”

“Why not?” says the first lawyer, jumpin’ up. “Because,” I says, “them as cared to know could soon have found out, and them as didn’t care wouldn’t ask.”

“You may stand down,” says he. “That’s a mercy,” says I, “for I’m stifled, and if I was you

I'd keep a peppermint drop in my mouth constant, as is a good thing agin the foul air in this place, as is like a wild-beast show for closeness."

So I was 'anded out, and as I came out I heard some one remark as I must be a born fool. "Pr'aps I am," I says; "but if I've any of our impudence I'll just step back and tell the judge." And it was all their spite agin me, for I don't think them lawyers got much out of me, and Mrs. Portlock got the day, as was all them wagabones' spite, through, poor soul, they're runnin' in her debt, and not a-wantin' to pay, and took a house within three doors, and shot the moon. So poor Mrs. Portlock was done after all, and for my part if I was labelled ever so I'd never go to law.

No. VIII.

Mrs. Brown on Gas Explosions.

DRAT the gas and them as invented it, says I, for never was there such stuff to blow up in this world as ever I see; but whatever can you expect if you only watches a gassy coal atween the bars how it will bust out, and as to livin' near gasometers, I'd as soon live near powder-mills, as did used to be near Hounslow, and went off with their own accord, and broke every window in Blackheath, though however it got across the water I can't think, and was heard by the lady as my own aunt was a-livin' with though deaf and dumb and bedridden, as jumped out of bed sudden in the fright, and was found heels uppermost in the coal-scuttle on the landin'. So as the sayin' is, you never can tell what you can do till you tries, for if you'd have laid her down ten thousand pounds that womar never could have put her foot to the ground in the nat'ral way. But as I was a-sayin', gas is all very well in its place; but if I had my way never in my settin'-room, as it makes that close and stifly as you can't draw your breath through in comfort, and was the death of both my birds, as died a-pantin' like over-blown Christians, and I have always been in fears of

through knowin' what happened at "The White Horse," Chelmsford, where the drunken potboy blowed out the gas in goin' to bed, a-fancyin' it was a candle, and was the death of the landlady a-comin' in unawares with a light, and hisself a cinder, as the sayin' is.

My constant words to Brown was, "Whatever you do, turn it off safe at night;" and he says, "All right."

"Well," I says, "Brown, do think what it would be if you was to leave a tap turned unbeknown through a-ketchin' your sleeve, and all the gas out of that large gasometer in the Lambeth-road was to work its way into our house." He says, "You'd be picked up somewhere about Wimbledon Common."

I says, "How you can lie like that in your own bed and say such awful things puzzles me, as might bring a judgment on you."

Well, the next day as ever were Mrs. Treadfoot, as were Jane Collins, and married to a upholsterer's foreman, come to see me, and brought the infant, as is sixteen weeks, but not gettin' on as I could wish to see it. So I says to her, "Whatever food do you give it?" "Well," she says, "anythin' as we are a-takin' ourselves. He's fond of suckin' a bit of bread and butter, and I've give him a little broth and bread."

"Now," I says, "Jane Treadfoot, does it stand to reason as a infant's stomach is not to be trifled with like that, as is apt for to disagree with them as is grown-up adults, for broth is a thing as I don't hold with unless a heavy cold with extra meat in, and I'd be bound not left to be cold for to take the fat off, as no infant couldn't thrive on." So she says, "What is best?"

So I says, "Baked flour is what some can bear and some cannot; but," I says, "in a reg'lar way

give me tops and bottoms boiled down and beat with a fork through a sieve till smooth as jelly, and a few carryway seeds boiled with it. Some gives milk, as I don't hold with, through bein' that heavy, as might be nat'rally expected when you come to consider as a infant ain't a calf as walks on four legs and requires more supports."

When we'd had tea I says to her, "Now as that infant is dropped off," as had been a-frettin' and a-dribblin' frightful all the time, "lay him down in a clothes-basket, as I'll make up comfortable for him with two large pillows," for I didn't care about him on my bed, as he might have rolled off on and done hisself a injury, and so she did.

Well, we was settin' a-talkin' very friendly, expectin' both Brown and Treadfoot for to come in. 'Liza Crellin was there, as is a gal with no nonsense about her, and works hard for to help clothe herself, not as she can make much by tattin', though I must say her work is lovely, not as ever I fancied that crochy worsted jacket as she made for me, as would always take me tight across the chest and under the arm-holes that small as it were painful; but then it certainly was warm and showed the figger.

Well, she was a-settin' there a-showing Jane Treadfoot a stitch in worsted works, when all of a sudden I says, "There's a dreadful smell of gas." So I goes to the top of the kitchen-stairs and says, "Susan, is that you as is a-lettin' the gas escape all over the place like that?"

Well, she didn't make no answer, so down I goes, a-knowin' as she's got a young man as she will talk to through the airey steps, as there ain't no gate to, but only three down to the kitchen door. When I got

down I found as all were dark, and though not afraid of them black beetles, don't hold with treadin' on 'em in the dark, as I slipped on one and very nigh put my elbow out Christmas night two years. So knowin' where Brown keeps a box of lucifers close to the back-door, I goes up slow to get 'em, and down I goes agin, and was pretty nigh stifled with the gas in that back kitchen.

I draws a lucifer along the top of the box, I see the blaze, I heard a bang, and then remembers nothin' more till I come to and saw some strange faces round me as was gettin' me out through bein' wedged that tight into the coal-hole under the stairs as violence was necessary. The kitchen-winder blowed out smack and everythin' in the place a smash.

I says, "Whatever is it?" Says one party, as proved to be from next door, and had come in with the police, "You've had a narrow escape."

"Well," I says, "a fire-escape is what I wanted; but what has 'appened?" "Why," says they, "your gas has been and exploded, and nearly tore the house up by the roots."

I hadn't got my senses right when I hears piercin' shrieks up-stairs. I says, "Is the 'ouse in conflagrations?" They says, as they pulled me out with a jerk, little thinkin' how awful bruised I turned out to be afterwards, "No, it's all right."

Then, says I, "Jane Treadfoot is took bad." So I hurries up, though scarified dreadful myself, and there she was in sterries on the rug a-sayin', "He's gone!" "Blowed into hair!" and all that.

So I says, "Jane," a-speakin' stern, as will often bring 'em to, "Jane," I says, "what is up with you?"

"Oh!" she says, "my own, my precious babby, to be blowed to atoms like this!"

I says, "Rubbish! Why, he's in my large clothes-basket in the back bedroom." She screams, "He's gone, I tell you, clean gone!"

Well, it give me such a turn; so I gets a light and up I goes, and there, sure enough, was the clothes-basket as empty as ever it was born.

I says, "Policeman, this is singler." "I believe you," says he.

"What do you think?" says I. "Chimbly," says he; "the draught have sucked that infant into the flue."

"Go along with you," says I. "Well," he says, "you'll see."

So I looked up the chimbly, but I didn't see, for there wasn't a vestment of no infant to be seen.

"Where can that Susan be?" says I, "as is the cause of it all," through a-leavin' of the gas turned on, a-sayin' as she was obliged for to step out for some firewood, as she burns up as if it was forests, though only seven bundles for sixpence.

It's lucky as Brown came in just then, for I don't know what I should have done. He pretty soon see as there wasn't no harm done beyond the kitchen, as it's lucky as I would have the dresser put in the front or I should not have a plate to eat off, not if it was to save my life.

All this time poor Jane Treadfoot was half faintin' and I really was quite concerned to think what had become of that infant, when if that Susan didn't come in with it in her arms, as had been upstairs when she heard the bang, and caught the child up and run over to Mrs. Crellins with it, a-sayin' as we was preys to a de-

vourin' elephant, and give Mrs. Crellins that turn as she come over herself, though far from well.

Of course it was very good of the gal to think about savin' the child, but she might as well have stopped a minute just to see if we was blowed away or not.

The babby he was all right, and so was his mother when she see him, and by the time as Treadfoot come she was able to tell him about it with a smile, though she wouldn't part with the child no more, but had her supper with him across her knees, as isn't my ideas of comfort.

And though that gal wouldn't own to it, of course she'd been and done it through a-turnin' the gas off before goin' out, and no doubt her shawl ketched the tap and turned it on agin unawares, as is my constant fears. Then she goes up to the babby, as she found restless, and so was kep' a-nussin' him till the blow-up come.

If you could see our back kitchen you'd say it was a blow-up, reg'larly scarified, as the sayin' is, and what it must be when a whole gasometer goes off I can't think. No wonder it causes lots of widders and orphins, as it's a mercy my house wasn't full of, and for my part I'd go back to sixpenny dips, only Brown says, "he ain't a-goin' to retrograde for nobody."

I don't know what he means; but if he had been blowed backards into the coal-hole as I was, he wouldn't use none of his fine words I know; and I'm sure it was opidin' as brought me through it rubbed in constant, as I didn't feel till the next mornin' when turn in bed I couldn't, and might have been a cripple to my dyin' day.

No. IX.

Mrs. Brown on Living in Style.

WE was a-settin' over our tea, me and Mrs. Chadwick, as I was a-stayin' with through Brown's business a-takin' him over to Ostend, as is like our Gravesend, though I have heard as the king of them parts did used to go there and bathe hisself, as is what Queen Victoria never did at Gravesend, and small blame to her.

Well, Brown was obligated to go over there through bein' on them railways, as is enough to drag the life out of any one, and I come for to stay with Mrs. Chadwick, not as I'm one to stay away from my home in a reg'lar way, but felt lonesome, and she's dull through the family, where she lives housekeeper, bein' away.

Just at tea-time who should come in but young Piper, as is her nephew in the buildin' line, and as good a son as ever trod shoe-leather to his widdered mother, a young man as I honours, with good wages, and never more than a pint and a-half a day summer nor winter.

He's got a good place he has, through bein' under one of them large builders, as is men of weight, as the savin' is.

Through that young man bein' one of them if you asks a question will give a civil answer, and not snap your nose off, I says to him, "James Piper," I says, "Mrs. Chadwick and me has been for a walk across the park for to see all them grand new houses as is springin' up, pallises all over what was market-gardens when I was a gal;" for we'd been and pretty nigh walked our legs off that very day all over Brompton, and the houses is that grand as it must cost thousands to keep up, and not one here and there, but rows of them by the hundred. So I says, "And will you tell me how it's ever done?" "Well," he says, "population will increase."

"Yes," I says, "that's natural, that is; but," I says, "the money is what I looks at; wherever do they get it from for to have such houses?" He says, "Well, it is odd; but, bless you," he says, "best part of them houses is bought on mortgage."

I says, "Whatever's that?" "Why," he says, "the same as bein' pawned."

I says, "Go along with you, pawn a house as you would a flat-iron, why it's out of all reasons; besides," I says, "how could they ever take it in?" He says, "Why, I means they never pays the money as they gives for the house."

"Well," I says, "I'd buy a house on them terms myself." He says, "So you can, and furniture too, and give parties and balls, and every one think you a swell with your saddle-horse."

"No," I says, "thank you, no saddle-horse for me." "Well," he says, "a carriage and all on nothin' but kite-flyin'."

I says, "James Piper, in my opinion you've had a extra half-pint a-talkin' such rubbish." "You may

call it rubbish," says he; "but if you was to ask many a one as lives in them grand houses for twenty shillins in the pound, they could no more do it than fly. Why," he says, "it's all credit and devil take the hindmost."

"Well," I says, "give me a crust come-by honest." "Oh," he says, "that's all very fine in books, and contentment's a beautiful thing; but what's a tradesman to do, he opens a shop or he builds a house, and he must sell his goods and let his house on the best terms he can."

I says, "That's right, that is." "Well," says he, "then he runs his risks of ever gettin' his money. If he gets paid he makes a fortune; if he don't he's bankrupt two or three times, and generally comes out a rich man in the end. There's hundreds now as holds their heads very high as has been through the hoop two or three times and thought none the worse of."

I say, "James Piper, no man can help misfortunes, as we are all born to, as the sayin' is; but," I says, "them as goes on like that in my opinion is downright thieves, and I'd tell them so to their faces if they was as high as Lord Mayors theirselves a-settin' a-judgin' with their gold chains round their neck a poor fellow as is a thief through poverty and bad example, and is all the while no better theirselves; not as I means to say I'm one as holds with thievin', for I believe as people can get a honest livin' if they works; but it's the same with rich and poor, they won't work and they will have what they like, and if they can't get it by fair means they will by foul. But all as I says is that it's hard on the man as steals a shillin' or two to be sent to prison, whilst him as has cribbed thousands is considered all right." I says, "I suppose there ain't

no cure for it ; but depend on it, as it'll come home some day, and a nice smash there'll be. How people can do it I can't think, for I'm all of a fidget if I owes three-halfpence for manglin' though it was only left from last week, and I don't suppose any one would trust me if I was to want a fine house and all manner ; but I knows one thing, when I do have it I'll pay for it, for them's my principles," and James Piper he woke up sudden and says, "All right," and so I hope it may prove.

No. X.

Mrs. Brown about Town.

I WAS a-stayin' with Mrs. Chadwick, as was down with rheumatic fever, and my own first cousin, and lives housekeeper to a family near the Marble Arch, as you can see the park from the top winders if you puts your head out far enough, though it's not a thing as I should think of doin' myself, for it looks bad, and well I knows how easy it is to get a crick in the neck, as Mrs. Chadwick did herself a-leanin' from the top winder a-tryin' to see the Princess of Wales brought into London; not the one as I can just remember parted from her husband, bein' faults of both sides, through her bein' addicted to liquor, and him a down-right wagabone, as I'd have brought to his senses pretty quick if he'd been a husband of mine. I means the present one, as seems a nice young couple, and gettin' their family about 'em, as is pr'aps as well, though Brown is sometimes a bit huffy about the money as they costs; but I always says, "What do it signify how much they have if they do but spend it proper?" as of course they do, like their gracious Majesty their ma, as must give away millions, let alone what

she spends, for we all knows as money is like dressin', it's no good if it ain't spread about, as the sayin' is.

Well, as I was a-sayin', Mrs. Chadwick and me was a-settin' at that very parlour winder, through the family bein' away, with the blinds open and all done up in newspapers and brown Holland, and her downstairs for the first time.

I says, "Ann Chadwick, you seems to have a deal of traffic about here." She says, "Believe me, Martha Brown, or believe me not, my life is a terror to me, that i is through them vehicules as invests the place," as the sayin' is.

I says, "You don't say so." She says, "I do ; for," she says, "what with buses and wans, to say nothin' of cabs as is overloaded a-comin' tearin' along like mad, as is enough for to shake the house down with their rumblins, the place is like perpetual earthquakes."

"Well," I says, "since I've been here, as is now hard on three weeks, I've been quite took a-back to see how things goes on, as I shouldn't have thought would have been allowed in the West-end, with a alderman livin' in the street, as his duty to look after them things."

For really they don't pay no more attention than nothin' when they drives, and I've been splashed from head to foot myself with nothin' but abuse if you says a word, and bits of boys a-drivin' as can't have no power over the horse, as I see one myself in a butcher's cart drive that violent, and no redress through the name not bein' wrote on 'em at all, and never at the back, as they did ought to be, for to be able to indemnify them a-lashin' the horse like mad for to escape the consequences, as knocked down a old woman in

Quebec-street a-goin' to the Edgeware-road on a errand as she required, and as luck would have it the wheel come off, or must have scrunched her into anatomy.

I says, "I wouldn't live in such a place if you was to crown me;" for well I remembers many years ago a-goin' with a friend of mine in the name of Mrs. Adams, as did families' washin' at Peckham for to take it home.

It was more for the ride than the pleasure as made me go with her to a house near Fitzroy-square, with as steady a man to drive as ever you see, and however he kep' on I can't think, for he had nothin' to set on but the edge of a clothes-basket as projected in front, and I had nothin' better than a perch for myself, as may suit a bird, but don't me.

Well, we was in Tottenham-court-road as they calls it, as is ridikerlous, though it's bein' a down-right paved street, as well I knows the hardness on, when if three roughs didn't come along their wrong side uppermost shoutin' out tremenjous. Our man pulls out of their way, and run slap again a 'bus with a coal waggon behind. I heard a crack, I felt a jolt, over I went, and if it hadn't been as it was linen as fell on me I should have been a pancake for flatness.

If you'd seen the way as that were broke, ship-wrecks was a fool to it, and poor Mrs. Adams that doubled up with her little finger put out, as I didn't think we should never straighten her agin, though she had three half-quarterns runnin' as hot as she could drink 'em. So I'm very careful about carts through a-knowin' my danger, as the sayin' is.

I says, "I calls it a-downright tamperin' with Providence the way as they drives about here;" but what-is worse than all is them livery stablekeepers a-breakin'-

in their horses, as is their business, but not the airy railings as they did opposite the week afore last, and pinned the old gentleman up in the doorway as lives next door but three, and was out a-takin' his airin's, as is his 'abits, though that lame as to be reduced to a walkin'-stick and umbrella to get along, as makes my heart come in my mouth whenever I sees him cross the street, as a butcher's cart will be the end on some day, as sure as ever it 'appens, as 'appen it will.

Well, to see that break as they calls it, and a break it was, for it smashed in them airy rails as if they was nothin', and to see that young horse a-strugglin' down in that airy, as was very nigh the death of the manservant a-goin' out for the coals, as he must have fell upon if he'd been a minute sooner.

As to that 'orse there wasn't no esticatin' him till they throw'd down trusses of straw as brought him up to the level of the pavement, as was split to bits, and must have been the death of any one as was under. It's a mercy it wasn't a perambulator and twins, as 'appened in Portman-square, as nothin' would have saved but the horse a-slippin' hisself and breakin' his leg, as was slaughtered on the spot, and a disgustin' sight, and did not ought to be allowed carried through the streets on them carts, as gives me that turn as I can't bear to see; and as to breakin' horses, why can't they do it in them country lanes, as is fit places for them till they knows how to behave theirselves in the streets.

And to see the father of families knocked down by errand carts, as never looked up agin, and the housemaid at the corner of the Edgeware-road steppin' out of the 'bus, through bein' her day out, and never even spoke, as I do believe must have been one of them

penny ones, though I must say the three-horse is the pleasantest to ride in, but did ought to be careful.

As to them 'busmen they gets desperate no doubt, not as that man did ought to have swore at me the way he did for stoppin' him short in the middle of Oxford-street last week.

"Do you wish to alight here?" says he. "No," says I.

"What is it, then?" says he. "Don't drive so fast," says I, "you'll be the death of some one."

I never heard anythin' like that man's remarks over my head to the coachman, let alone the names he called me to my face, a-takin' advantage of me bein' alone in the 'bus, as I took his number; but, law bless you, what's the use of that? who's to go and waste a whole day a-punishin' of him, as is only punishin' his wife and children after all? but certainly it is hurtful to the feelin's to be called them epitaphs as belongs by rights to the beasts of the field, as the sayin' is.

Well, I says, it's a blessin' as Parliament is a-settin', because pr'aps if they knock one of them down they'd 'ave a act at once as would be down on them furious drivins; but I will say as the police did ought for to take up every cart as hasn't got the name wrote outside in a audible way, and in my opinion them tradesmen's carts, as is left at airy doors unprotected, and the young man a-wastin' of his time and the cook's too at the kitchen-door, didn't ought to be allowed; not as I've any objection to them friendly chats as has led to 'appy matches, as the sayin' is, but that ain't the time nor place, and pr'aps the children's dinner obliged to be late through the joint not a-comin' as throws every one out.

As to them dust carts they're a downright pestilence, and so is 'avin' in coals, as did ought to be done like the sweeps and scavengers, early in the mornin'; for I've heard Mrs. Chadwick say often as the drawin'-room has been filled with coal dust through next door 'avin' in their coals about eleven o'clock with the windows open on a fine mornin', and a clean toilet-cover reg'lar begrimed, to say nothin' of white counterpanes and bed-furniture.

I'm sure I'd have everythin' black if I lived at the West-end, for it's downright beastly, and no wonder families keeps down in the country as long as ever they can; not as I should care to do it; but really if things go on as they are there won't be no livin' in London, for we shall all be run over and poisoned with dirt, as you must eat a peck on afore you dies, as the sayin' is; but it's my opinion as them as lives in London must eat many a bushel, as may account for parties a-gettin' so tremenjous stout, as Mrs. Chadwick have done lately, for what don't poison fattens, as the sayin' is.

No. XI.

Mrs. Brown has the Sweeps.

I DO think if there is a thing as I hates in this world it's havin' the sweeps, as always reminds me of him as didn't ought to be mentioned for blackness, and is the dirtiest job in all the world, for that soot is stuff for to fly like chaff before the wind, as the sayin' is.

But I says, "Sarah Ann, we must have 'em sooner or later, and pr'aps it will be as well for to have 'em well over; so," I says "step over and ask Mrs. Brocksop if she can come for half a day, as will help you clean up, and you may tell them sweeps if they can't be here by six they may stop away."

It so happened as Brown was in one of his contrary humours that night, and nothin' didn't seem to go right with him.

I says to him, "If you don't fancy liver and bacon don't eat it, as is only half a pound, and the gal will relish."

It's a thing I wouldn't eat if you'd crown me, and was a-takin' a bit of toasted cheese myself, as Brown was that snappish over, a-sayin' as I must have the stomach of a horse for to eat that leather, and he knowed I should be 'avin of them startin' dreams as

made me hit him in the eye, a-fancyin' as he was young Robison at the corner, as is always a-settin' of his dog at our cat.

I 'appened just to let the sweeps drop accidental to him as he was a-smokin' his pipe, and if he didn't go on till my temper got put out. I says, "Mr. Brown, if you likes to live in a hog-sty with smoky chimbls, you may do it in welcome; but," I says, "I never will. I never heard such a man in all my born days, as is out of all reason in your ways, and would glory in seein' your house in flames, with engines a-plyin' all over the street and plugs a-spoutin' in all directions." I says, "If I was a-goin' to thrust a tender infant up the flue as might stick with straw lighted to the soles of his feet you might talk; but," I says, "it's a thing as I never could a-bear from the time as the skeleton come down the chimbley in Peckham Rye, the first night as the parties moved in and lighted the fire in the front kitchen, as was supposed to be a sweep as had been forgot." I says, "A lifeless ramonure can't have no feeling, as I have put it off from week to week, and often stood over the gal myself and see her put the broom up as far as she could reach, and brought down pecks. I'm sure the turn as it give me a-lookin' up last Sunday evenin' and seein' the red-hot soot in layers, as it seems always to do on a Sunday evenin' as though for the purpose."

So Brown he says, "If you're a-goin' to mag on like that about the sweeps, I wish as they'd take a fancy to you and carry you off with the soot."

I says, "Mr. Brown, if you'd like to see me took out in a sack, pr'aps it's carried out altogether as you wishes me," and I was that hurt as I busted into tears.

But, bless you, he didn't mean it, for though rough

temper at times he's as fine a hearted man as ever lived, and he come round in a instant, and said as he wouldn't part with me not for sacks upon sacks of sov'reigns let alone soot; and we had a drop of somethin' hot, and he says to me, "Don't you be a-gettin' out of your warm bed in the mornin' to let them sweeps in, if the gal don't hear 'em, wake me." I didn't say nothin', but had my thoughts.

I don't think as it could have been the toasted cheese, but somethin' made me dream frightful, for I thought I was old Marney the sweep, and had stuck in the back kitchen chimbley, and nearly fell out of bed in my struggles to extricate myself, and then I dreamt as Brown was old Marney, and was puttin' me into the soot-bag head foremost, and kicked that wiolent as woke Brown up. I was dozin' off when I heard the bell, and set bolt up in bed, for I was dreamin' of fire.

I says, "That gal won't never hear 'em," for I do believe as she'd sleep the clock round, as the sayin' is, and as Brown was in a sound sleep through bein' disturbed twice, I thought as I'd slip on my gown and go down.

I never did hear such tyrants to ring as them sweeps, and I really thought as they'd have tore the bell down by the roots, as the sayin' is. Well, down I goes, for as to callin' to that gal it's no more use than whistlin' to a pig, and there was a cuttin' wind a-blowin' as sweeps must feel though they are black.

Of all the tempers as that old Marney showed I never did, a-shovin' at the door afore I could get it opened, and sendin' me back agin the wall with the key a-takin' me in the chest, and usin' words a-pre-tendin' as he thought I were the gal, and if I had been he hadn't no right to use that langwidge to.

I says, "Go down and do the kitchen first, as I'd see was ready over night, and the gal will be down to show you what's next."

I spoke short like, for I didn't hold with old Marney's ways, as is a old brute to his second wife, young enough to be his daughter, and I never would have in my house, only the other sweep was transported through a-takin' a teapot away in his sack from the widder lady opposite.

I called that gal up and then goes to bed for half an hour. When I got up and went down to the kitchen you might have knocked me down with a feather, for there was the sweeps still there.

I says, "Whatever are you a-doin'?" "Why, a-sweepin' your chimbley, as is as crooked as a ram's horn, and has broke my brush, and be hanged to it."

Leastways he said it was hanged as he uttered, but it didn't sound like that to me.

I says, "You've been time enough over it anyhow." He says, "The front kitchen was a long job."

"The front kitchen!" I says with a scream. "Whatever do you mean? Why, it ain't a kitchen, and wasn't to be swep'," and in I rushes and thought as I should have dropped, for if that dratted gal hadn't been and let them sweep the chimbley, and never moved a thing.

I says, "You good-for-nothin', idle, lazy hussy." "It wasn't my fault," she says, "they began it afore I was down."

"Then why wasn't you down?" If she didn't say, "If you hadn't gone down a-fidgetin' and lettin' them in it wouldn't have 'appened."

"You told me to do the kitchen first with your

own lips," growls old Marney. I says, "It ain't a kitchen, you idjeot."

"Then it did ought to be," says he. "I ain't no patience with such stuck-up ways, as if a kitchen wasn't good enough for you."

It did put me out to be cheeked like that on my own premises; so I says, "Get out of the place this moment, you good-for-nothin' old brute. How dare you come here and spile my carpet, and cover everythin' with your beastly soot?" as had begrimed the place from top to bottom, and nowhere for to have breakfast.

I do believe it was all that gal's spite, because I'd give her warnin' on the Monday through her givin' me a lot of cheek over the grease-pot, as I never will allow any more than a pig wash-tub, as I've known the tea-spoons to be thrown in.

Old Marney he wanted eighteenpence for the front room, a-stickin' to it as it were a kitchen.

I says, "Never in this world." He says, "I'll summons you, see if I don't."

I says, "Do it," and off he goes in a reg'lar huff. But when Brown came down he made me send the money, sayin' as he wouldn't have no summonses nor rows; but certainly it went agin me to pay him, and couldn't help a-chucklin' when I heard his wife's brother had come in and caught him a-raisin' his hand agin her, and had given him his own ramonures over his shoulders, and the magistrate dismissed the summons as he took out agin him.

But all I've got to say is, that I do wish as they'd invent somethin' as would consume its own soot, for them sweeps is my constant dread; and as to old Marney I'd rather sweep the chimbls with my own hands

than he should ever darken my doors agin, as left his marks all along the passage, and shook out his soot-bags in the front garden for spite, as the place was pisened with for many a day, and flew into the parlour-winders, and begrimed them from top to bottom.

No. XII.

Mrs. Brown at a Public Dinner.

I'LL tell you, Mrs. Simmins, how it was I come for to go, for I said to Brown when first mentioned, "I never heard tell of such a thing in my born days, as though not a-sinkin' in the wale of years is no longer for to be thought a gal; the idea of any one as is a lady a-dinin' in public like that." Brown he says, "It's what your betters has done, and even Queen Victoria herself, as I see with my own eyes a-dinin' in Guildhall with the Lord Mayor long afore the Prince of Wales was born or thought of, or ever she was married."

"Well," I says, "it seems bold to me, and though I do hold with the newspaper, and am sure as a more respectable man than Mr. Hacket never drew breath, as we gets our *Weekly Lloyd's* from reg'lar every Saturday, and his wife a pattern of neatness for to keep seven children on newspapers, with nothin' else to mention but sweetstuff and ha'penny canes, as ain't much to bring a family up upon." "Well," says Brown, "I've took the tickets out of respect for Hacket, as is a man I looks up to, and was drawed for

the jury with; so whether you go or whether you don't, I'm a-goin', and you can do as you likes."

Well, you see, Mrs. Wilkins, mum, through not bein' one to hold out I give in, as I heerd say through Mrs. Hacket, as the dinner was to be very grand, and she says, "The speeches is enough for to make you cry your eyes out." I says, "I do like to enjoy myself like that, so I'll go."

What to wear puzzled me, for, you see, dinin' in public is such a thing for to make you stared at. So I looks up what I'd got, and found a dress as would do wonderful well.

I don't know how it is, but I do think as there is truth in a-keepin' a thing seven years, as the sayin' is, and it will come in agin, for I'm sure that dress ain't seen daylight these five years, and very well it looked, through bein' a purple satinette; but, law bless you, when I went to put it on my waist was under my arms, and it wouldn't meet by ever so much.

Well, Miss Corbit, as is in the dressmakin' line, as I'd sent to, and as soon as she looks at it she shakes her head and says, "You can never wear it in this world without a new body, as a black velvet jacket is what I should advise."

I says, "I never can dine in a jacket." "Well, then," she says, "have a velvet body made low."

I says, "It won't be no use afterwards." She says, "It would be," and so I let her have her way, a-trustin' to her taste.

When the day come I was all of a fidget, because she hadn't brought it home; no more she didn't not till nigh on two o'clock, and when I put it on the way as I had to squeeze to get into it was reg'lar suffocation. I never see such a dress for lowness.

I says, "Miss Corbit, why, I should be pointed at if I was to go about undressed like that." She says, "Oh, Mrs. Brown, you must if you're goin' out to dinner."

Well, I didn't much relish the idea, and it was all too tight for me about the arms. I'd got a very pretty cap trimmed with white satin and a flower, with white gloves and a yellow scarf. I thought I never should have got them gloves on, and then the fingers was a inch too long.

Certainly Brown he did look noble. With hair brushed back over his forehead, and a clean shirt with a frill, as is a thing as becomes him, and a handsome green velvet waistcoat, with his watch ribbon and a bunch of seals, I do assure you I felt proud on him.

The moment he see me he says, "Come, old gal, none of your lamb fashion for me; you put somethin' more over your shoulders." Miss Corbit says, "Mr. Brown, you'll spoil the look of the gownd as fits like wax."

I felt as Brown was right, so I goes up and rummages out a swansdown cape, as just fitted over nicely. I had my ridicule, and a fan with a smellin'-bottle for fear of my head comin' on.

Brown he was full of his jeers, but both Miss Corbit and Mrs. Challen said as I looked quite noble, and as to the gal, she said she never see anythin' like me but waxwork. Brown busts out a-laughin', a-sayin' as I should be run away with afore the night was over.

One thing I did not relish was a-goin' out in a cab without my bonnet, as did seem that strange and look very bold. Off we went, and the cab jolted and jumped about a good deal, and splashed in at the winders that

frightful, and I do assure you I got a lump of mud as big as a shillin' right slap across my nose, and another one come dab in my eye. I was afraid to wipe it off, knowin' how it would smear, so had to set with one eye shut all the rest of the way for to let it dry. The cab as we went in was beastly dirty, and soiled my white kids dreadfully.

Wasn't I glad when we got to the 'all where the dinner was to be, but my legs was that cramped with settin' cooped up in that cab so long, that in gettin' out I ketched my foot in my gownd, and fell sprawlin' on the pavement, as they'd covered with a mat, or I should have been begrimed to death from head to foot.

I'm sure if I had been Queen Victoria herself, I could not a-been treated more noble like by gentlemen in black with snow-like bosoms to their shirts as showed me in, and give me over to the lady as looked after the ladies, as helped me for to get the splashes off my face, and set me to rights in general.

I'd have give the world for the least drop of somethin' jest to compose the nerves, for I was all of a tremble; but thinkin' as dinner would take it off I didn't say nothin'.

I was rather took a-back when I heerd six was the hour, and felt as I must have a-somethin', for we was a hour too soon; but law, the place was that solemn and genteel I'd have died afore I'd have asked. So I sat a-waitin' and wishin' as it was tea as we was goin' to have, for the smell of soup made me feel rather all-overish.

It was ever so long afore parties arrived, but when they did come they was pretty thick, and I never see such dresses, and I must say as I didn't consider as I

looked despicable, and as to Brown he looked a regular king among 'em.

There was a many high characters come for to dine, and him as they called the chairman was a Member of Parliament, but, law bless you, no pride, a-speakin' quite facetious, but it must have been half-past six afore we set down.

I never did see such a noble room as it were, fit for kings and queens, and the silver on them tables, with the clean cloths and napkins, as must make the washin' alone a little fortune; there was three wine-glasses to every one; and the parties as waited looked a deal better than many as was a-settin' down, though I didn't much care about havin' the soup spilt in my lap, as Brown said was all my fault through me not a-lettin' the man put it down afore me. It was lucky as I had my napkin handy, or my gownd would have been ruined, and the waiter he give me a clean one in a jiffey.

I says to Brown, "If you likes mock turtles as is 'up to the knocker,' take some;" but he said as it's too good for him, bein' meat and drink too.

I was glad when I got a glass of wine, for I did want a-somethin' I didn't have no fish, but just a patty, as was enough for a relish; and then come the real dinner, as was good and wholesome, and beautiful cooked.

I never tasted a better crust than there were to a pigeon-pie. I says, "This was never made by a heavy hand;" and the lady as was opposite says, "Bless you, no; their pie-crusts might be blowed away for lightness."

She was a nice-lookin' woman, but that stout as made me tremble, for her bein' laced in as she was didn't seem able for to feed herself nor draw her breath

comfortable. I can't say what I did have nor what I didn't have, for they was a-changin' my plate perpetual.

I says, "However they gets through the washin'-up puzzles me—they must do it by steam." "No," says a party as was opposite, "hot water."

I says, "Excuse me, but I ought to know how to wash a dish, as requires scaldin' water to get the grease off and plenty of cold for rinsin' "

There was pastry in plenty and jellies and all manner, and then comes the cheese and salad, not as I ever takes green meat myself after a hearty meal, as don't seem natural; but I certainly did enjoy the pull as I got at the beer, as I'd been a-starvin for all dinner. I wish as my body had been a little more easy in the armholes, and as to my swansdown tippet it was suffocatin' me. After the cheese there was a deal of hammerin', and some parties sung beautiful though short, and I says, "Brayvo!" but, law bless you, Brown give me such a drive and says, "Hold your row, it's grace as they're a-singin'."

I says, "More shame for 'em. Let people say grace for theiselves, and not go howlin' it like that all over the place," though they sung very nice I must allow.

I never did hear anythin' like the way as that chairman and them gentlemen talked, sometimes a-makin' you die with laughter, and then a-talkin' about the sick, the widder, and the orphin' till I'd a lump in my throat as made me feel dreadful choky. As to the poor lady opposite it was very nigh her death, for she'd got her mouth full of nuts or somethin' dry, and took a drop of wine just as somethin' was said funny on the top of her sheddin' a tear, and I did think as her

breath was gone for ever. I says, "Undo her whatever you do," and if some one hadn't had a knife handy, she never would have got through it.

Well, that upset me, and what with the clatterin' of plates and knives and forks, and talkin' and singin', and the lights and the heat, I was that confused as I didn't hardly know where I was, though I must say as there was lovely singin' as made me drop off a little bit though listenin' attentive, as I'm apt to do in church.

At last, home we went, and the way as my head whirled round in that cab I never did, and in the mornin' Brown asked me how I was? I says, "As fresh as a daisy."

"Ah!" he says, "that comes of it's bein' good wine." I says, "What do you mean?"

He says, "Never mind." I must say as it was a lovely dinner, and I shouldn't mind if them news-venders was to dine together once a month and ask me.

No. XIII.

Mrs. Brown at the Volunteer Review.

It's more than four year ago, and never should I have gone but through bein' took unawares, for I certainly never did have such a turn in my life as it give me for to overhear Brown say, in smokin' a pipe along with Barnes, as cool as a lettuce, as the sayin' is, that he was a-goin' for a sojer.

"What!" I says, "at your time of life go a-sojerin' ? Never with my consent, as did ought to be consulted, I think, through havin' been a good wife to you, and to see you brought home with a cannon-ball through you, and come down to be a widder on a shillin' a day." He says, "Whatever are you a-owlin' and a-drivin' at?"

I says, "I'm neither a owl nor drivin'; but all I've got to say is, that if you've been and listed you did ought to be ashamed of yourself; and as to livin' in barracks I'd die first, as was the death of poor Mrs. Mullins through never recoverin' the draughts as settled in her limbs, and though livin' to seventy-two was never able to hold her needle agin nor see for to thread it." So Brown he got reg'lar put out with me, a-sayin' as I was a gabblin' old fool, and would be to

my dyin' day. I says, "That's right, 'eap abuses on my 'ead and deface my memory when gone; but," I says, "don't go for to lower me in livin' to the top of a baggage waggin', as I've seen them myself a-changin' barracks, and nothin' but the wash-tub to fall back upon." Up gets Brown in such a rage and says, "I never see such a pig-headed old blunderbust as you are. Who's goin' for a soldier? Who's a-dreamin' of such rubbish?"

Well, I see he was that put out as I felt might bring on words as ends in bitterness, so I says, "Brown," I says, "I shouldn't like to see you bein' drilled through by a corporal with a cane, as would be hurtful to the feelins, and never should hold up my 'ead agin," and I busted into tears. Well, Brown 'as a kind 'art, though rough to look at outside, so he says, "Don't cry, Martha, but tell me what you've got in your 'ead?" I says, "That's more than any one can tell all in a minute; but," I says, "didn't you say as you should be on the march Easter Monday?" He busts out laughin' and says, "I never did see such a reg'lar old water-cart as you are, a-snivellin' over that. Why, I'm only a-goin' to the wolunteer review as is to be held at Brighton, and you shall come too if you like."

Well, I didn't much fancy goin' through a-knowin' what reviews comes to; but yet I didn't fancy Brown's goin' alone, as there might be dangers, so I says, "Well, then, I will go." He says, "You'll have to put your best leg foremost I can tell you, for it's stiffish work, and we must be at London-bridge by seven."

I says, "Seven's no hour this time of year, as is up by the lark, as the sayin' is." I says, "But didn't we ought to take somethin' for to support 'uman nature up them downs." He says, "Bless you, there'll be

plenty to eat and drink, and the only thing as you need have is a pocket-pistol about you."

I says, "Whatever for? I'm sure I'm not a-goin' to carry no firearms, not even among soldiers, as is a rough lot, yet brave-arted fellows, and honours the sect as I belongs to." Brown he says, "You take a drop of somethin' on the quiet, as we may both require afore the day is out." I says, "Right you are," and acted according. I was a-thinkin' as I should like to be dressed nice Easter Monday, and knowin' as my pink muslin was put away rough-dried, I gets it out, as were lovely with two deep flounces, as becomes my figure.

I'd a nice white musling pelerine, as 'ad blue ribbons run through it with a wallenseens edgin', and I wore my winter bonnet through a-fearin' rheumatics in the 'ead, but trimmed with a bright red it looked uncommon cheerful.

It was a lowery, showery-lookin' mornin' that Easter Monday, as I knowed it would be through my feet a-throbbin' like ten thousand daggers all the day before, and I didn't sleep remarkable well through a-takin' a bit of cold weal for supper, as is a thing as don't suit me in the general way.

I was up by five, and says to Brown as he did ought to be stirrin', as only said "Bother," and dozed off agin. I goes down-stairs, through bein' resolved as I'd have a comfortable breakfast, and lit the fire, but the wood was that damp through me a-forgettin' to put it in the oven for to dry overnight, that I could not get a cheerful fire, and as to them coals of Slater's, I'll never have no more out of his shop, as is twelve-and-six the arf ton, and burns to nothin' but dirt, and no more 'eat throwed out than if you was a-standin' by the sink.

I called up to Brown more than once, as swore he

never heard me, and come down in a nice humour not clean shaved, and wouldn't hardly touch his breakfast, as I told him he'd feel for before the day was out, and true my words come upon him at ten o'clock at night, when reduced to desperation through hunger's thorn.

I didn't take nothin' with me but a shawl and my umbreller, with nothin' in my redicule but my anker-chers and the little flat bottle. I've seen crowds and I've heerd of crowds, but never did know anythin' like the one as there was at London-bridge. I says, "No, Brown, not if I knows it, never will I be tore limb from limb by them as lets their angry passions rise, as the sayin' is, so, if you please, I'll wait a bit." He says, "Come on with you," and drags me like a charot-wheel through the crowd, and the way as I was bumped and insulted nobody wouldn't credit.

As to the train it was only fit for to carry cattle, and we was that scrouged as settin' down was a mockery, and thankful I was when we got to Brighton. There was a cold wind a-blowin' with a constant drizzle, and glad I was to go into a very respectable eatin'-house for to take a little somethin' in the ways of refreshment, though only a bottle of stout and a Abernethie biscuit. When we was a-leavin' there Brown says to me, "If we should miss anyhow on the Downs, find your way here and wait for me." I says, "All right," and gets a card with the address, or I'm sure I never should have known the place agin.

It was pretty fine when we started for the Downs, and I wasn't sorry as we walked on sharpish, for I felt the wind cool, as is natural to a musling dress. Why ever they calls 'em Downs, as is all ups, I can't think.

I never did see such a sight of milingtary in my born days, and the officers on their 'orses a-tearin'

about like mad. I do think as Brown was a little off his head, for he went a-hurryin' on, shoutin' like a maniac when he see the wolunteers, as give me a turn through 'avin' heerd say as he was once light-headed when a child and down with the measles, as I've known 'appen myself, as is a sign of weakness.

When we was all in the Downs, as the sayin' is, I don't think as ever I did know such wind; it was a-blowin' great guns; and if I hadn't stuck my umbreller firm in the ground over and over agin, I must have been blowed over like a leaf.

At last I gets to a place where a party told me I should see best, and no doubt I should if it hadn't been as the rain come a-drivin' down intorrently. As to Brown, he went a-boundin' on like a harrow from a bow, and left me behind.

Well, the wind set right in my face, so as I couldn't see nothin'. I puts up my umbreller but, bless you, it was inside out in a jiffey, and the ferrule had come off through me a-usin' it that free as a support, and all the whalebones flew about like mad. I never see such a wreck in my born days. I couldn't keep it up, and I couldn't get it down, and just then come a puff of wind as nearly took my bonnet off, so I drops the umbreller, as the wind ketched, and away it went rollin' down the 'ills, and was blowed into ribbins in no time.

I must say it was a noble sight to see the wolunteers a-exerting themselves all for nothing, for the good of the country, and I'm sure many on 'em bits of boys and others as did ought to have been looked arter thro' being well on in years and a-sufferin' in their feet, I should say, by their walks as was limpy.

A party as was standin' near me, he says to another,

"I tell you what it is, I'm blest if they can tell which way they're a-firin' in such wind and rain as this." So says the other, "I suppose there will be a few more deaths than usual." I says, "Whatever do you mean—is there any danger?" "Well," he says, "you never can tell, and a stray ramrod might pin you to the earth like a skewer through cat's meat." I says, "What, ain't there no protection agin bein' slaughtered savage and found a-wallerin' in your gore, as the sayin' is?" "Well," he says, "the only thing as you can do is for to throw yourself flat on your face when they fires, as will protect you." I says, "Wherever can Brown be got to?" "They're a-goin' to fire," says the young man; "duck your head, Bill." There came a report like thunder broke loose, there was clouds of smoke blowin' towards us, and in my flurry I forgot to fall on my face, but went a-sprawlin' on my back, and if I rolled over once I'm sure I did twenty times. Well, parties picked me up and asked if I was hurt. I says, "Not wounded, thank you, but where is my redicule?" But, law bless you, I'd fell on it, and my little bottle was smashed to atoms: and I do think if it hadn't been for a party as gave me a drain out of charity, I must have perished.

I sat and I sat on a stone by the roadside a-waitin' for Brown to come back till I was that perished as I says, "I'll go back to the refreshment rooms," as took me hours for to do through a-missin' my way.

When I got there I says, "I'm a-famishin' creature." The party as kep' it says, "You're not alone by thousands, for they've been and eat up the town."

And all as I could get was a cup of tea without a drop of milk, and a crust of bread as was days old. Brown never come in till near eight o'clock, and had

been makin' too free with the beer, though he said it was the smoke as had got down his throat as made him speak thick.

I know as we did get a train at last and got home; but my head was that confused I don't know how, and I heard it strike one as we turned into our street, and was thankful for a bit of supper as Mrs. Challin had got ready, but it wasn't afore I'd had a good glass of somethin' hot as the life come into me agin, and I says to Brown as was quite hisself agin, "Next time you goes a-sojerin' leave me at home."

No. XIV

Mrs. Brown on Hampstead Heath.

YOU may well say as time flies, as the sayin' is, for I'm sure I would no more have believed as it were four years since that time as I went up to 'Amstead 'Eath in Easter week than nothin'

I'm sure if it hadn't been to please Mrs. Pettigrew I'd never have gone, as is daughter to my own cousin, Ann Chadwick, and married to Pettigrew, as is a master tailor, and a nice business too, but him a reg'lar curdmudgeon, as grudges everythin', and a reg'lar Molly too through a-givin' out even a pinch of tea when she's up-stairs, and a-grudgin' Mrs. Bloomfield, as you might trust with untold gold, as the sayin' is, a drop of spirits, as would sooner lay her head on the block than be overtook in liquor, and has nussed in the first families for respectable tradespeople, as knows what comfort is, and no stintin' of nothin'

So Mrs. Pettigrew she comes to me and says, "Do go, that's a dear soul, for I do want 'Melia Corbett for to have a outin' with young Johnson, as her father won't hear on, and as fond a couple as ever you see." "But," I says, "whatever will Pettigrew say?"

"Oh," says she, "if you goes it's all right with

him, for he reg'larly swears by you." I says, "Oh, indeed," not a-believin' a word on it through havin' heard him very different speakin' on me as a-interferin' old cat, as is not my notions of politeness to a lady, as only went to see how she was gettin' on, and found as the nurse had left her at the end of the week through his meanness in not allowin' her to be engaged proper, and if it hadn't been for me both mother and child would have gone to the bad, as the sayin' is; not as Pettigrew 'd have cared, in my opinion, except a-'avin' to shell out the money for the funeral in a lump, as is one of them as is always a-savin' at the spiggot and lettin' out at the bung, as the sayin' is.

Well, I agreed for to go with them, and though a bitter East wind I started off, and got to Mrs. Pettigrew's by twelve, as is a long way from the Commercial-road.

I'd dressed myself warm through knowin' how searchin' them East winds is, and wore my Saxony cloth, as was a purple, but bein' dyed had took a rich brown. I wore my black beaver bonnet, as 'adn't see light for many a long day, but brushed up nice through 'avin' a touch of rheumatics in the head, as is my constant terrors. I'd a thick Angola shawl and a fur round my neck, as is made out of all as is left of my dear mother's swansdown cape, as the moths had made fearful 'avoc with; not as it's a thing as I holds with through bein' that flew, as is apt for to get down the throat, and many an infant's been 'alf choked in swallowin' of it before now.

I very soon see how the land laid between 'Melia Corbett and young Johnson, as is a reg'lar spoon in my opinion; but what put me out with everythin' was a-findin' out as Sarah Pettigrew was a-goin' on the sly

unbeknown to Pettigrew, as was out of town, a thing as I don't hold with through a-lookin' double-faced, and so I told her. Well, they all got round me, a-sayin', "We shall be back to tea," and so on till I give in.

I can't say as I cared much for the early dinner we had, as was fried mutton chops, and neck chops too, as black as your hat and raw at the bone; the potatoes was stones for 'ardness, and there was a yeast dumplin' like a ball of lead for 'eaviness, as I know'd it would be when I see young Johnson a-cuttin' it with a knife, as I told him on, and only got laughed at for a superstition.

It was quite two afore we got to the end of Tootingham-court-road, and waited and waited for the 'bus till my feet throbbled agin, and when it did come up it was full.

There was plenty of 'buses as would take us to the bottom of the 'ill, but I says, "None of your climbin' 'ills for me." We waited for another 'bus, but that was full too, till at last we got into one as said it would take us to within a stone's throw of where we wanted to go. If there is a thing as I hates in this world it's a 'bus, as is a downright cruelty van for both man and beast, as the sayin' is. I'm sure I was pretty nigh crushed to death and stifled in that 'bus, and glad to get out through 'avin' of a old man as was a cripple a-proppin' hisself up agin me all the way, and put his crutch on my toe with all his weight a-gettin' out, as nearly lamed me for life.

When we got out of the 'bus I didn't see no signs of 'Amstead 'Eath as I remembers when a gal, but all houses. So I says, "We must be miles from it." They says, "Only a step," and on and on we walks

till I thought I should 'ave died with 'eat, a-pantin' for breath, with a cuttin' wind a-blowin' as made me afraid for to undo my shawl.

I did think as that bonnet would have strangled me, as I was obliged for to tie tight down because of the wind as kep' a-blowin' it off. If it hadn't been as we stopped at the top of the 'ill and had some ale, I do think as they'd have had to get a stretcher for me. I dare say as 'Amstead is a nice place, but that constant climbin' don't suit me.

Well, when we got on the 'eath, as was crowded with boys and gals and rough characters, as was larkin' all about, Mrs. Pettigrew says, "Wherever can they be got to?" "Who?" says I.

"Why, Sarah and Ann," says she, "and the three children."

"You never 'ave sent them three children out alone all this way with two bits of gals like that," says I.

"To be sure I have," says she, "two in the preambulator and the boy to walk."

I didn't say nothin', but my thoughts was 'eavy over them children, for there was soldiers a-being exercised all over the place, as always terrifies me where children is through a-knowin' how apt they are to fire at random, as the sayin' is.

I was pretty nigh a-dyin' with my feet, but law bless you, there wasn't a seat to be had nowheres. I says, "How much further are we a-goin'?" They says, "Only over there, where we're a-goin' to tea," as was nearly four o'clock.

I see as Sarah Pettigrew was all of a fidget about the children, as we couldn't find nowheres; but 'Melia Corbett kep' a-sayin' as she was sure the gals was told

to meet us over by the lake, and says she, "Let's 'urry, or we shan't be there to-night."

I says, "It's all very well for you, but my legs is lumps of lead, as I can't drag 'em along." She says, "'Ave a donkey shay."

I says, "I will, and thankful;" but there wasn't such a thing to be 'ad, but a man told me as he'd got a animal as he'd put his own mother on, as was a lamb for gentleness, and I should look like a queen. Well, I thought as it would look ridikerlous, but was that tired that I do believe I should have got on a rockin'-orse or any other animal, besides there was a party a deal stouter than me as was a-ridin' on one quite genteel. So I gets on, leastways through a chair and a deal of help.

The man he says, "Set back." I says, "I shall ride over his tail if I do."

He says, "All right." I says, "Whatever you do don't leave go on his 'ead." "All right," says he, and gives the creature's mouth a wrench like, and off it went.

I never know'd what shakin' was till then. I hollars out, "Stop him," but, law bless you, no one paid no attention, and I didn't like to scream, and if that beast of a donkey didn't go close up agin the bank, and scrape my knees all along it, as if he done it for the purpose. I hollars out, and a boy comes runnin' up behind, and no sooner as the donkey heard him a-comin' than he gallops off like wild. I give a scream, every one shouted out, the boy come up to hit the donkey, but give me the blow instead, as I felt for many a day. On went that donkey, and I see a sheet of water right in front of me, as he were makin' dead for.

I says, "Death by drownin' I never will meet, I'll throw myself off first ;" but bless you, I hadn't time to do it when the donkey put down his 'ead, throwed up his 'eels, and I pitched for'ard and rolled to the water's hedge, as the sayin' is.

I could have killed Sarah Pettigrew and the others for laughin', as I might 'ave slipped in and been drowneded, and as it was the mud and water was up to my ankles.

A nice mess I was in, and obliged to go into a cottage for to 'ave my shoes and stockings dried, and when I come out I couldn't find none on 'em for Sarah Pettigrew had gone off a-lookin' for the children, and them two spoons had gone their own way I suppose.

The good woman made me a cup of tea, as I didn't fancy through bein' all black, as I always takes mixed, so I sends for a little somethin' hot, as did me good. Just as I was a-takin' it up comes Pettigrew, a-lookin' like thunder, and says, "Where's my family, as you've come enticin' away from home, you tipplin', old sponge?" I says, "Hang your family, as you won't catch me a-comin' near agin in a hurry; and as to tipplin', look at home, old red nose."

He says, "I will 'ave 'em. I says, "Go and get 'em, and don't bother me."

Well, he certainly swore by me then, and turns away, and when I'd finished what I was a-takin', I gets to the omnibus, as took me to the Bank, and another took me to our corner, and I says to myself, "No doubt 'orse exercise is 'olesome for them as takes it reg'lar, but it don't suit me?" for though I didn't tell Brown, I really did think as that donkey had shook all my bones out of their sockets. I ain't

see Sarah Pettigrew since, but when I do she'll 'ave a bit of my mind, and pretty hot too; for young Johnson ran away with that gal, and her father come and blowed me up, though quite unbeknown, and called me a old kidnapper, as is what I won't stoop to at no price.

No. XV.

Mrs. Brown Loses a Dog.

I DID say as I never would have a dog for to darken my doors, but when Brown brought it in I must say I never see such a beauty, as is called Sikey, though it's wrote on the collar "Physic," as plain as can be, but I suppose that's what it is in French, where it come from.

I never see a lovelier coat than the creetur had got, as soft as silk, with a eye as seemed for to beam on you, as the sayin' is. I never did see such a dog in a house; no trouble no ways, except a nasty 'abit of gnawin' things, as I very soon cured it on.

I'm sure that dog know'd what I was a-thinkin' about, with a temper like a lamb, or else our cat never would have took to it as she did, though a mother herself through me 'avin' saved two beautiful kittens, one a tabby and the other a black, as is both promised, for parties as knows me is glad to have a cat out of my house.

I'm sure the way as that dog took to them kittens if he'd been their own uncle he couldn't have been kinder, though at times more free than welcome, as the sayin' is, through a-takin' them out of the basket when-

ever the mother had turned her back, as was a good mother I must say.

Brown was always at me about not overfeedin' that dog, and I'm sure I never did, not as he were a greedy dog, nor ever touched the cat's dinner, as I considers honourable, and might make many a Christian blush, as I've knowed take mean advantages at my own table in helpin' theirselves to the best, a-thinkin' me to be unawares.

The trouble as I took with washin' and combin' that dog nobody wouldn't believe, as knowed Friday by his instinct, and would hide in the copper-hole, for I must say as I did take a pride in his coat, as shone like silver, and not a tangle in it, and wouldn't have trusted him to our Liza, as is too hasty in her ways.

Well, I must say as I was anxious about the animal, for Brown was a-talkin' constant about that dog bein' lost, "For," says he, "there's money in him." I says, "Well, then, if he should be lost through my fault I'll find him."

I don't think it was three weeks after as I'd said it when one day I wanted to go as far as the Wandsworth-road, and took the dog with me, through a-thinkin' as the poor thing was a-pinin' for exercise.

I'm sure I can't a-bear lookin' after a dog, for turnin' round constant don't suit me, but I'd had it out once or twice quite safe, and so hadn't no fears, and certainly he followed beautiful, till all of a minute I looked round and he was gone. I stared agin, for I thought he must have flowed away, and then I says to myself, "He's been and run into a shop or somewheres." So I stops and calls "Sikey, Sikey," till parties asked me what I'd lost, and one young chap with his impudence told me I'd better whistle for him. I'm sure I was up

and down that road two good hours, but not a vestment of him could I see, and as it was a-gettin' dusk I give him up. I could have cried when I got home, and Brown was put out, for we really felt quite lonesome without the poor thing.

I says, "I'll have bills and offer five shillins reward." He says, "Don't be a fool, you'll never get him back for five pounds."

I says, "If I'd know'd he was that valuable he never should have moved but with a collar and string."

Well, there, he was gone more than ten days when I was a-mentionin' of my loss to Mr. Rawlinson, as kéeps the "Risin' Sun," as says to me, "Why ever don't you apply to the bishop for him?"

I says, "What's the bishop got to do with lost dogs?" "Oh," he says, "everythin' Why, bless you, he's got Acts of Parliaments for 'em, and there ain't a dog-stealer in London as don't quake at his name."

I says, "Wherever is he to be found, bless him?" Says he, "In Bond-street, that where's he's bishop of."

I says, "Oh, indeed ; but," I says, "won't it be a liberty in me for to go and speak to a bishop about my dog, as is unbeknown to his lordship?" He says, "Not at all."

I says, "What's the number?" Says he, "Ask any one when you gets there, everybody knows him and everyone looks up to him." I says, "I'm there the first thing to-morrow."

I didn't say nothin' to Brown, through wantin' for to surprise him in bringin' the dog back with me, but off I went by the West-end 'bus, as put me down in

Piccadilly, and soon found my way to Bond-street, as I walks up till I meets a policeman, as I asked for to direct me to the bishop's. "Bishop of what?" says he.

"Why, of Bond-street, of course," says I. "Oh," he says, "there it is, and him a-standin' in the doorway."

A noble figger with a apron on like the driven snow, as I've heerd say bishops always wears. Of all the kind parties as ever I see he was the kindest. He felt for me like a father over that dog.

"Ah," he says, "my dear, I've had losses myself, heavy losses; but," he says, "I'll try and help you. Walk in," says he.

I did walk in, as is noble premises, and the guns all about the place, as, of course, is a terror to them dog-stealers. Well, he showed me his dogs as is picters, and told me how he had lost a hangel through a fancy old maid a-takin' it into her head as it was a rabbit, and had it destroyed.

She must have been a fool I should say, and wanted lockin' up herself, as nobody wouldn't be safe with; but with all his kindness he wasn't able to throw no lights over my dog. So I says, "I turns you many thanks for your kindness; for," I says, "kind you are and a feelin' heart," for I could see as tears was a-comin' into his eyes when he spoke of his loss, and, bless you, the place full of the very first lords in the land, as he showed me hisself a duke as he'd nussed a babby, and pr'aps 'ave christened, not as he carries on the bishop now through havin' retired, but he's a noble-'arted man as ever I see.

I was a-goin' home with a 'eavy 'art, and a-walkin' slow down Parliament-street for the 'bus to overtake

me, when what should I see in a man's arms but the very dog itself.

Well, just as I come up he puts it down for to light his pipe. I gives a chirrup like for to make sure as it were the dog. The animal looked up and know'd me. I pounces on him and ketches hold of his neck.

"Let my dog alone," says the fellow, a-scowlin' at me. "Shan't," says I, "it ain't your dog."

"It is," says he. "You're a falsehood," says I, "for it's mine."

Well, I'd got the dog that tight as he couldn't jerk it out of my hand, and there was plenty of people a-passin' as stopped.

"What's the row?" says a fellar. "Why, this old female's a-tryin' to grab my dog," says the other.

"And she's a-goin' to grab it, too," says I. "Are you?" says he.

"Yes," says I, "and here's the police," and up one come in the very nick. I says, "Policeman, this is my dog as I lost last Thursday week in the Wandsworth-road, as this fellar has got." The man says, "Who are you a-callin' fellar? I tell you this dog is the property of a gentleman in St. John's-wood as lost it on Friday, and I've got it back for him."

I says, "Policeman, it's all lies," I says, "I'll swear to the dog." I says, "My name is Brown; I'll give you my address."

So he wrote it down, and asks the man the gentleman's address in St. John's-wood, as he said he had forgot, but know'd the house. Says the Policeman, "Walker."

If you'd seen them two fellars step it at that you'd 'ave smiled, as was reg'lar roughs, and that dog got that dirty as I don't think any one would have know'd him

with a bit of rope round his throat, as had been evident tied up. I was that pleased as to 'ave a cab, and so got home just before Brown, and to see that dog jump over him when he come in it was for all the world like a Christian, and I do believe as the cat was as glad to see him back as any of us.

About a day or two after up comes a brougham to the door and out gets a young lady, leastways she was dressed handsome, but when she opened her mouth she spilt it all through her talkin' that loud, with her face painted and floured up, as I could see though she did keep her wail down, as I considers rude in speakin' to any one. So she bounces up to the door and says, "I want to see Mrs. Brown." I says, "By all means," through bein' at the parlour door. I says, "Walk in."

She says, "I've called about that dog." "What dog?" says I.

"The one you claimed on Monday in Parliament-street," she says, "it's mine." I says, "Beggin' your pardon, it ain't."

She says, "A friend of mine gave it me on Saturday; he paid five pounds for it, and it was stolen before three o'clock the same day. The poor man you met with it was bringin' it home to me when you took it from him." I says, "A poor man he may be, but he's a thief, for he's robbed you as well as me. Why," I says, "how could he know about the dog bein' yourn in the time?"

"Oh," she says, "my friend sent a red-coat man down from the club into Westminster Saturday night to ferret it out, and he came and told me he was on the track Sunday mornin' " "Well," I says, "tracks on a Sunday may be all very well for them as likes 'em, but that man is a thief, tracks or no tracks."

"Come," she says, "Mrs. Brown, you're a dear, jolly old soul, you'll let me have the dog." "Not if I knows it," says I.

"What will you take for him?" "Nothin'," says I.

"Then," she says, "I'll summons you and make you give it up. You call people thieves, look at home," she says. "Now," I says, "my good girl, you keep a civil tongue in your head, and take yourself off, or I'll have a policeman in, for I do believe you're one of the gang."

She bounced out of the place a-wowin' wengeance, as I says, "Let her have, but she don't get that dog for all her impudence, as is no doubt one of a gang of swindlers, as goes dashin' about dressed up for to take parties in, but I ain't such a fool as I looks, as the sayin' is, and if they gets hold on Sikey agin they may keep it."

No. XVI.

Mrs. Brown on Bringing Up a Family.

I OFTEN wishes myself back in the Commercial-road, that I do, when I used to do for myself, with only Mrs. Challin a-comin' in for half a day occasional.

I'm sure I was very happy, a-workin' away all day long, and sometimes a-singin', as would often make me laugh to myself, as I ain't no singer, and never were, except to get the children off; and them songs would bring 'em back into my mind, and I'd often have a good cry, 'specially when I thought of my boy out in Canada. How I have loved that dear fellow, and how I've laid awake night after night when a infant, and worried about his teeth; and then when he'd growed up and stopped out late o' nights through a-likin' his friends, and goin' to the play, and only seventeen, as Brown didn't hold with. So we was obliged to let him in on the sly, and have often told a white one for to save him from his father.

Ah, he was a nice-looking boy, he was, and I shall never see him again, nor give him a kiss, and see his bright smile. It's very hard for a mother to bear; I can't make out how it is as Brown don't feel as I do, though I must allow as I caught him more than once

a-sobbin' like a child, as he said was hiccups, but I know'd better.

Why can't boys keep steady, and be a comfort to their mothers, and not go a-smokin' and a-dressin' beyond their means ; though I must say as I did feel proud of my boy when he was a-goin' out Sunday afternoons, and would slip out so as his father shouldn't see him.

I do think the only serious words I ever had with Brown was over that boy, as, though havin' 'is faults, and sometimes would answer me disrespectful, as the sayin' is, wouldn't never stoop to a falsehood. I never will forgive that Ann Travers for the way as she treated him, as was two years older than him ; and then to marry a journeyman baker of a Easter Sunday, without a word to my poor boy, as met 'em out a-walkin' that day week.

He never was the same boy agin ; and when I heard him answer his father that night, as made me interfere, for I said to him, " Joe, I've been a good mother to you, and will be to my dyin' day, but if ever I hear you dare for to break your Commandments like that I'm done with you." I do think as he was sorry, but had a proud heart as wouldn't give in, and then took a place where he lived out, and only come home of a Sunday, a-bringin' his things to be washed in a little black bag. I knowed it would never do, and it never didn't, for he soon got into troubles, and 'listed in the end, as you've heerd me speak on often and often ; but, I do assure you, though the house where we lives now is very nice—quite genteel like—I'd go back joyful to Condick-street, and 'ave my Joe near me, 'specially now as he's married and got three.

I do think if any one was to say the word, I'd be

off to Canady this very day, not as I'd leave Brown, certainly not ; but yet to see my boy's children would be a heartful for me ; not as I can complain of Brown, as has sent him out the money for to buy himself off ; and he's got a farm ; but I can't get him out of my head night nor day. Not as I should get on well with his wife perhaps, through being of the Irish persuasion, not as that's anythin' to me ; and as to the Irish, I've known 'em golden jewels for hearts, though hot-tempered.

I suppose I didn't bring him up as I did ought to, yet I don't know, for I've heard a good deal about bringin' up a family ; but there don't seem to me no rule to go by, for what suits one temper don't another. I'm sure there was Mr. Eatwell, as were a minister, his was a nice family, as come to my door a-givin' me a lecture 'cos the children was a-playin' harmless of a Sunday afternoon in the bit of front garden—not a-makin' no noise to disturb the neighbours, as is a thing I don't hold with, and wouldn't allow was it ever so.

Them Eatwells had nine, and if ever you see such goin's on, as had false keys, and got out and in by the washus' winder, and brought disgrace and misery on that good man ; leastways, considered good, and if chapel-goin' could do it, he was good, for I'm sure he preached his inside out, as I could hear him a-bawlin', through his chapel winders bein' open, in my back garden of a summer evenin' often.

I certainly was sorry for that poor woman when them two boys of hers was took out of the house 'ancuffed that mornin', and I heard her scream plain, and got seven years a-piece ; and as to her daughters, ah ! poor thing, she might well take to drinkin', and

draw him to the same, as was turned out of his chapel, and come to beggary.

I never shall forget to my dyin' day a-goin' into their place, a small house with four rooms, as they'd moved into when troubles overtook 'em, and I only come to go through Mrs. Davis, as did used to sit under him, and stuck to 'em like a true-hearted woman till took with rheumatic fever herself, and says to me a-goin' to see her, "Do go and see after them poor Eatwells, as must be starvin'."

So to pacify her I did go, and hammered at the door ever so long, till Eatwell come to answer it himself. He was a man I never could abear, but when I see him all unshaved, with bloodshot eyes, and a old rag of a dressin'-gown that filthy as give you a turn, my heart melted. So I told him as I'd come from Mrs. Davis, for to see after his good lady. He didn't seem much to understand, but at last he says, "Step in," and so I did. He says, "Upstairs," and up I goes.

Never shall I forget the sight as met my eyes. A old tent bedstead and a chair without a bottom was all there was in the room. I don't believe as there was anythin' over the bed but some old rags of clothes, and the bed itself was only a tickin' stuffed with shavin's; and there was that poor creature a-layin' in her clothes, such as they was, with her 'air all matted, and a skeleton for thinness. I says, "'Aven't you had no advice for her?" He only shakes his head. I says, "Whatever does she take?" He says, "Nothin'." I says, "It's murder to let her go on like this." He didn't make no reply, but the poor woman gave a groan like, and moved her poor blue parched-up lips, as though she wanted drink. I says,

"Where can I get a drop of water for her?" He says, "No water," and goes to a cupboard and fetches out a physick bottle as had a little sperrits in it, as he poured into a teacup. I says, "Never will I stand by and see you do such a thing," but she opened her eyes, and seemed to gloat at the sight of the cup. He says, "It's the only thing she's touched for three weeks."

Just then there come a double knock at the door. I thought as it were pr'aps the doctor, so hurries down to open it, and there stood a fine lady all dressed out, as said, "Mrs. Eatwell at home, my good woman?" I says, "Pray who may you be?" "Oh," she says, "it's all right, I'm her daughter," and flaunts by me into the passage.

I says, "You her daughter! Then," I says, "I hope you're come to nurse her, for she's dreadful bad." She says, "I've no time to stop, but I've brought her some money." So I says, "I think you'd like to give it yourself, as I'm a stranger." So she says, "Well, I can't stop a minit," and up she trips. I follared her pretty close. She says, "Which room?" I says, "Straight for'ard," and pretendin' for to try to open the door for her, got her in sudden with a bit of a push. I couldn't see her face, but I heard her exclaim solemn, for there was her mother a-layin' dead, with her head out of bed, and her father a-settin' on the side, foolish in drink. She says, "Why did you bring me to sich a sight?" I says, "I bring you to it, you base hussy, as has left your parents to perish, a-rollin' in your willany."

She began for to scream as I put the poor creature back in the bed. That roused the poor man up, as said, "Lizzie, is that you? Your mother wants you."

She's very ill. Why didn't you come before?" So she says to him, "It's no fault of mine." I looked at her for to see if there was any feelin' in her heart, but, bless you, not a bit, nor a tear in her eye, though she did pretend to keep a-wipin' it with a lace-edged 'ankercher, but that ginger like, for fear as she should take off the paint.

Jest then a old woman, as was a downright bunch of rags and filth, put her 'ead in at the door, and I see as she'd sperrits in a bottle. Well, she begun a-sayin' a deal about how them poor couple 'ad been a-goin' on a-drinkin' hard night and day

I says, "You're a neat article, you are, to let a woman die like this, and never say a word." So she says it wasn't no business of hers, as only come in once a day to do for them. I says, "You have been and done for them; but," I says, "now you run for a doctor." So the daughter says, "Rubbish; a doctor can't do no good." I says, "You say a word, and see if I don't 'ave the police in," as soon brought her to reason, and she says, "Pray have everythin' done proper, and I'll pay you handsome, for I really can't stay, and can do no good." I says, "Stay or go as you please; but," I says, "don't look to me for to do anythin', for I won't, as I wouldn't mix myself up with none of your disgrace."

I shouldn't have stayed so long, only the poor old man was like in a fit, and I'd undone his collar, and put my pocket-'ankercher wet to his head. Well, my lady, she was a-goin' to flaunt off, when up come the doctor, as says, "This is disgraceful; there must be an inquest. I never saw such neglect in my life." "Nor more didn't I," says I.

Well, she says she wasn't goin' to stop there to

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be talked to like that, and she says to the old woman, "You knows my address," and off she bounces.

We had her to the inquest though, as she come to in deep mournin', though, as I said, she might as well 'ave left off the paint; and of course the werdict was nat'ral causes, though I don't think as livin' on nothin' but gin for nearly three weeks is altogether nat'ral, as I told the jury. The poor man was took to the infirmary, and only lingered a fortnight, and never seemed to know nothin' nor nobody.

So I says to Brown over our tea, "If that's the end of a serious family, I think as there must be somethin' wrong about their seriousness," as made him forget hisself, and say it was all trade, as I didn't hold with, for I says, "There's many as is good Christians;" and he says, "No doubt; but they makes no row over it, nor crams it down your throat for everlasting." And I says, "That's right, that is."

No. XVII.

Mrs. Brown Forgets the Key.

I'M sure what the world is a-comin' to I can't think, for when I was a young woman in service I used to think it a great treat for to get a holiday once in two months, or even three, when I got my wages, to go shoppin', a-layin' of them out to advantage, but none of them tuppenny-ha'penny rubbish of bargains for me, as never looks well and crinkles and spots with the least drop of rain, 'cos I'm sure I never shall forget that carmelite dress of mine, as was all cockled up through only a shower.

But law bless you now the gals must have their wages once a month, as is right enough, and off to spend them just as if the money was a-burnin' a hole in their pockets, as the sayin' is. I'm sure when that gal of mine come last Tuesday and asked me who was a-comin' to take care of the 'ouse, I stared agin.

"Take care of the 'ouse," says I, "what for?" " 'Cos," says she, "I heerd you say as you was a-goin' out to-morrow, and I thought as you wouldn't like to have it left."

"Left," says I, "why ever should it be left?"

Wherever are you a-goin' to?" "Oh, it's my day out," says she.

I says, "I suppose as the next day'll do as well for you." "No," says she, "I'm a-goin' to be bridesmaid to a young lady as is goin' to be married."

I says, "Sarah Jane, don't talk that rubbish about bridesmaid to a young lady, as you means no doubt some one on your own spear of life, as you didn't ought to be ashamed on; but," I says, "of course if it's a weddin' as you're a-goin' to you must go," as is the same thing as a berryin', and can't be put off.

I was put out I must say, for Brown he was a-goin' to be late that night, and I'd promised for to go up as far as Wardour-street, for to drink tea with Mrs. Charlton, as is niece to Mrs. Chadwick, and settled comfortable in the second-hand furniture line, as is a good match for her through bein' left a orphan and brought up at one of them workin' schools, as is no doubt good places, though I can't say as her work as she put into Brown's shirts was any great things.

I can't a-bear to be worse than my word with anybody, and 'avin' promised Mrs. Charlton, felt as go I must, so I gets Mrs. Portlock for to come in and look arter the 'ouse, as is a steady woman though deaf as a beadle, as the sayin' is, though I'm sure the beadle wasn't deaf where I did use to go to church when a gal, for he'd hear a smile among them charity boys as sharp as a lynx, though in general he brought his cane down on the wrong head, and would even make the minister look up through the crash; not as I holds with hittin' boys over the head with three-quarters of a hour sermon as is beyond their comprehensions.

I says to that gal of mine, "You be in at eleven

at the uttermost, and let Mrs. Portlock go home, and you needn't set up if I'm not in by then," for Brown he'd promised he'd try and come for me through a-goin' to a dinner at Paddington, as had the key.

I must say as I shouldn't care for to live among them second-hand things as lumbers up the place, and I should say harboured the dust let alone other things, but Mrs. Charlton she seemed happy enough, and I must say I never see a more bountiful tea laid out, not as it's a meal as ever I takes much with through not a-seemin' natural.

Charlton, he's a good-natured man though a widderer, with a grown-up daughter as is a fright and looked scornful on her father's wife, but had a party there as she was precious sweet on, though he didn't seem to see it.

Well, we was all very pleasant over tea, and Mr. Charlton says to me, "Mrs. Brown, mum, was ever you at The Oxford?" I says, "Bless you no, though I know'd a young gentleman as were brought up there, and a nicer young man I never knew, though he did break his mother's heart through a-run-nin' in debt, and then emigratin'." So Charlton, he says, a-laughin', as is his way, "I don't mean the College, I means the Concert Hall, as is splendid, and the music downright lovely, as you can sit and listen to a-takin' on your refreshments."

"Well," I says, "I did go to one of them places once, where I was that treated as I never shall forget, and as to the company the least said is the soonest mended, as the sayin' is." So Charlton he said as we'd better go, and Mrs. Charlton were agreeable, and so was his daughter and the young man as she was a-tryin' to hook, for I can't use no other word.

We took it very leisure to The Oxford, as is only in Oxford Street, as you might nat'ral expect to find it. Charlton, he paid, and we all went in as is a beautiful entrance and a noble room certainly as might do for a church, as Charlton said he remembered it well a old inn yard; so I says, "What changes there is in this world to be sure as them as is gone wouldn't know the place if they was to come back."¹

I must say as I wasn't sorry for to hear Charlton orderin' of refreshments, for though I don't take much I like a somethin' after walkin', and was glad as we got nice seats up near where the singers was at a nice little table as just held us through me bein' a little deaf one side.

They do sing wonderful to be sure, and I nearly died a-laughin' about a party as was shet out of his own 'ome by his good lady in the pourin' rain through not a-comin' in till two in the mornin', as is disgraceful 'ours for any one, let alone a married man to keep, as was the ruin of young Green, with a mother and five sisters on his 'ands, as might have done well in the paintin' and grainin' line, only took to sing songs and low company, as brought him to the hulks afore he know'd where he was.

I never see anythin' more lovely than the way as the ladies was dressed, as come on first one by one, and then all in a 'eap, and sung wonderful, sometimes one and then another, as others seemed for to be interruptin', and then they all hollar together and the fiddles a-playin', and I don't know what they wouldn't have done, for they was a-gettin' very wild, only there was a party as stood in front as looked like a school-master to me, and kep' a-shakin' a little stick at 'em as kep' 'em in order, not as I should like for to

be treated that way myself, as would aggravate my temper.

I don't think as ever I did enjoy myself more, but was a-thinkin' as time was a-gettin' on, and must be in by eleven in case Brown shouldn't turn up, but they all said as he'd be sure to come, so we stopped for to see them 'Ungry dancers.

Well, afore they begin the musicianers come down by the side where we was a-settin' and begin for to tune up. There was a party close to me as blowed a big brass thing, as Charlton called a trombone, I don't think as ever I did hear such a thing to roar. Why bulls is bleatin' lambs to it.

I says to myself, "I can't a-bear this through my deaf ear," but didn't like for to make no complaints through there bein' a crowd all round me a-lookin' at the dancers, as was no doubt wonderful, and I expected for to see their legs fly off their bodies every instant, but that trombone kep' a-blazin' away into my ear till I was very nigh mad, and a drum was a-bangin' away like wild. At last I ups and I says, "I can't stand this no longer. Now, young man, you be quiet with that roarin' beast of yourn;" but if he didn't blow louder than ever right in my face, till I ketches up my umbreller and shoves it slap into the horn; if you'd heerd the yell as there was. Charlton ketches hold on me and says, "Are you mad?" and forced me down, and there was a reg'lar tumult, and up comes a party and says I was a-disturbin' the peace. "Well," I says, "I may be, but you can't say as I begun it, for I'm sure that 'orn 'as nearly blowed my 'ead off."

Parties hollars, "Turn her out," and Miss Charlton says as I was a disgraceful old thing. Well, that

did aggravate me, and I says, "I won't have no words ; but," I says, "if you please I'd rather go, through not bein' used for to be spoke to like that."

I was rather short with the Charltons, as kep' gigglin', and no sooner gets into the street than I gets into a 'bus, as took me to the Regency Circus, where I just caught the Clapham. I hadn't no idea how late it was till I heard it strike eleven by the Horseguards, and was all of a fidget through 'avin' said as I'd be 'ome by then, as must have been full half-past when I got to our door.

'Ammer, 'ammer, knock, knock, that I did ; but, law bless you, I might as well have knocked at the parish church. I says, "Whatever can be the matter ? that girl can't sleep like that," and just then if that old brute Greenhill, as lives next door, didn't open his window and throw a jug of cold water slap over me, and pretended next morning as he thought it was boys a-larkin'

I was drippin' wet, and in the shock I hollars "Murder ! Fire !" and up comes the police, and if he didn't take and spring his rattle, and all the police in the neighbourhood come a-runnin', and it's a mercy as they didn't bring the engines.

Well, the police wasn't over civil, and one on 'em said he'd bust in the door. "No," I says, "you won't. I don't hold with bustin' it in just as it's been fresh painted too." So they walks off in a huff.

I shivered as I stood through the duckin' as I'd had, and kep' a-tryin' to warm myself a-walkin' up and down, and 'eard it strike one when who should come up but Brown, as hadn't got the key, and if he didn't say as I'd said as I'd bring it and wait for him at Mrs. Charlton's, as I can take my davy as I never did ; but

I see as he'd turned the corner the least bit, as the sayin' is, so wouldn't have no words; but he made short work of it, for he took and broke a pane of glass in the kitchen-winder, and got in and opened the door; and if there wasn't that owdacious gal in her bed a-pretendin' as she'd been fast asleep and never heard nothin', as was only her spite through me a-makin' her come home by eleven, as I give her warnin' on the spot.

What aggravated me most was Brown when I told him in the mornin' about old Greenhill givin' me a duckin', if he didn't laugh like mad and say, "Serve you right for not a-takin' the key," and said as it wouldn't be fair to send the gal away, as had only obeyed orders, and was no doubt a 'eavy sleeper, as pr'aps, after all, is right, but I'll take very good care to give old Greenhill a bit of my mind, and when next I goes out I'll take the key.

No. XVIII.

Mrs. Brown on the Underground Railway.

I'M sure if any one had told me as I could be whisked away from Moorfields to Marrybone in ten minutes I should have said, "Go along with your rubbish," through well remembering them Paddington coachmen, as was put down by the omnibuses a-comin' in, and a by-word for abuse, and was hours in gettin' from the Angel, Islington, to the Edgware-road.

I must say as I felt very much like stiflin' as soon as I got in the station, and didn't fancy a-bein' drove that wiolent through them sewers, as they ain't no better than, with a chokey feelin' as ketches the breath, and no wonder when you comes to think as we was formed for the open air, and not for them places as comes nat'ral to rats and rabbits and other amphiberous creatures as I heerd a party give a lecture about, as must be singler in their 'abits I should say and a-breathin' through their backs, as is no doubt a conveniency to them with their heads under water, or drowned they must be. Not as I was altogether pleased with that party as give the lecture, as was a-talkin' about things as would keep out water, and askin' what was best.

So I says to Mrs. Portlock, as went with me, and settin' next, in a whisper, "There's nothin' better than biled ile, as will make anythin' waterproof." What does she go and do but up and tell him what I'd said. So says he, "What did the good lady say?"

"Biled ile," says Mrs. Portlock. "What!" says he. "Biled ile! You means boiled oil."

"No, I don't" says I, "I means biled ile." "But my good woman," says he, a-gettin' warm over it, "you means oil as has been boiled."

I says, "Don't good woman me, I means nothin' of the sort; but if you asks for biled ile you'll get what I tell you, and if you don't you won't."

So I settled him; but what him and other jack-asses could see to grin at I can't think, for they must be a ignorant lot to lecture, and not know what biled ile is.

But as I was a-sayin; that Underground Railway, which though wonderful, I must say as open day is quite good enough for me. Well, I was a-wantin' to go to Marrybone for to see a party as had come home from Canady, and seen my boy, and wished for to hear particklers from a eyewitness, as the sayin' is. So off I goes early into the city through 'avin' of some business at the fire office; and I'm sure the confusion was that awful, as glad I was to be safe at the station just as a train was a-goin' to start, and afore as I'd time to wink, as the sayin' is, I was shoved head foremost into a carriage and away we went under them dark arches, as smelt mouldy and struck chilly.

A young man as was settin' opposite to me says, we gets a fine view of the country, mum, don't we?"

“Well,” I says, “you may on your side, but I can’t see nothin’ but darkness wisible, as the sayin’ is.” Just then we come to the light, and I see as he was a-jeerin’ at me.

Well, on we went till at last nearly every one had got out of the carriage, but all in that hurry skurry as give me a turn, and I set a-waitin’ till a party put his head in at the winder and said, “Change here for Kensington.”

I says, “I shan’t do nothin’ of the sort, for I’m a-goin’ to Baker-street.” “Then,” says he, “you’ve come past it; you must go upstairs and get a ticket to go back.”

I says, “What a shame to bring parties out of their way like this.” He says, “Can’t you read nor got no ears, for,” he says, “the names of the stations is wrote up.”

I says nothin’ but goes to get my ticket, and I’m sure them stairs is enough for a day’s journey to any one. Well, I gets into the train, and spoke wery severe to the guard about their ’avin’ brought me too far, when a impident jackanapes of a fellow says, “If they was to look out for all the places as old women wants to stop at, as never knows where they’re a-goin’, they’d never go on.” I says, “You speak when you’re spoke to, Mr. Snip,” as shut him up in a crump, as the sayin’ is. So nothink more wasn’t said, and we kep’ a-stoppin’ at stations and parties kep’ a-hurryin’ in and out of the train, as terrified me to death, particler one old gent as was a-gettin’ out with a large basket, as he’d been and wedged in the door.

Well, he loses his temper over it, and gives it a wiolent shove, out it goes sudden and him nearly after it, leastways he would have been if I hadn’t

ketched hold on him with a sudden grip and pulled him back.

“What the devil do you mean by that?” says he. “Mean!” says I, “why there wasn’t an inch between you and eternity,” for in a moment they’d banged the door that violent as nearly caught his fingers, and on goes the train and we was in darkness.

The way as that old fellow went on, instead of gratitude, as was his duty, nobody would never believe but them as heard his langwidge, as was downright disgraceful. He called me everythin’ as he could lay his tongue to in abuse till at last my temper give way, and I says, “You’re no gentleman, but a low-lived character for to talk to me like that when all as ever I did was to save your life.” He says, “I shall be black and blue all over through your pinches, let alone my basket pitched out of the train, as I wouldn’t have lost was it ever so.”

I really don’t know what he’d have said next only the train stopped, and out he bolts, and fell a-sprawlin’ on the platform, and as I was a-follerin’ him I stumbled over him and come down too. It’s a mercy as he fell first, or I might have been under the train.

Well, they picked us up, and just as I was on my legs and up comes a policeman a-sayin’ as they’d been a long while on the look out for some one to make an example on a-gettin’ out of the train whilst in motion, and I was just the party. If that ungrateful old willin as I’d saved the life on didn’t take and turn agin me and say “Serve her right, for she shoved me out, and has been and assaulted me.” I says, “Policeman, I gives him in charge; do your duty; I’ll appear agin him for foul abuse.”

But the policeman he was one of the gang I think,

for if he didn't give a grin and say, "Oh, it's only a lover's quarrel; you'll be better friends after it." The idea of me havin' anythin' to say to that old fellow.

Well, when I come for to get out of the station I found I had been and left my redicule in the train with the address where I wanted to go. But I says, "Persevere I will." So I makes inquiries, and finds as Marrybone wasn't far off, and walks on, a-rememberin' as it were Titchfield-street as I wanted. So at last I asks a policeman, as said I were a-comin' away from it and did ought to have got out at Portland-road, this was Baker-street.

Well, I goes back to the train and says, "I'll try once more," and gets down-stairs, but only just in time to have a gate shet in my face with the train a-standin' there waitin'.

I says, "Let me in, I wants to go," and thumps hard with my umbreller, and I'd have given the fellow there a good drive with it if I could a got at him, for he wouldn't open that gate, and off the train went without me.

When I was let in I give him a bit of my mind. but law, it's no use a-talkin' to them low-lived characters, as only walked away and didn't even answer. When the train did come up I had a hard struggle for to get in, and off we was, and what with the worry and the flurry I really did feel quite knocked up, though I took a glass of ale and a biscuit at Baker-street, as was as well.

It wasn't long before I felt a little bit dozy, and though I only remembers one station we stopped at just after I'd got in, all of a sudden we come to a dead stop and everyone was a-gettin' out.

I says to a porter, "Wherever am I got to?" Says he, "Farrington-street."

I says, "But I wants the Portland-road." "Then," says he, "you must go upstairs and get a ticket to go back."

I was put out, to be sure. I says I won't do nothin' of the sort; you're a downright gang of swindlers, as 'tices people into a trap for to run 'em back'ards and for'ards, all day; but," I says, "you ain't caught a greenhorn this time, and if I could see a policeman I'd give you in charge." "Oh," says the fellow, "here's a policeman, p'raps you'd like to talk to him."

Well, up he comes, and I tells him what had 'appened to me, and if he didn't take and say as I'd better be careful not to be a humbuggin' about the station, as p'raps I might get into trouble.

I says, "Whatever do you mean?" "Why," he says, "take care as you're not taken up on suspicion of being one of a lot as goes back'ards and for'ards by the trains a-pickin' of pockets. For," he says, "they're females for the most part."

I says, "Do you dare for to insinuate as I'm a female, and given to thievin'?" I says, "I'll make you prove your words, you good-for-nothin' fellow, you!" He didn't say a word, but he takes me by the arm, and says, "Now you be off, or I shall have to do my duty, and lock you up."

I was all of a tremble at such an insult, I busts away from him, and how I got up the stairs I don't know; and had only strength for to get a cab, and I cried fit to break my heart all the way home, and all the comfort as Brown give me was a-sayin' I wasn't fit to be trusted out alone, and as he must get some

one to look arter me, as I'd sooner be under ground altogether than put up with, but next time as I wants to go to Marrybone, as I never got to, no more of them dark places for me as didn't ought to be allowed.

No. XIX.

Mrs. Brown Sees the Coming Home from the Derby.

“WELL,” I says to Mrs. Maddick, “I certainly should like to see ’em a-comin’ home, as is a fine sight, with their shay-carts, po’shays, four-in-hands, and all manner ; but as to them parties as throws the flour and eggs, if they comes my way I’ll settle their ’ash, pretty quick, with the police, for I’m sure the sight as I were through a-standin’ by Mile-end-gate five year ago, to see them a-comin’ back from Fairlop Fair, I never shall forget. I was whitenin’ and heggs from top to toe, and everythin’ I had on reglurly spiled, as was a lovely black velvet bonnet trimmed with red ribbons, as looked that cheerful in the mornin’, and was batter pudding at night, and a new shawl, leastways as good as new, through ’avin’ been cleaned, as brought the colours out as fresh as paint, as were orange and green, with a mauve ground.”

Well, it was agreed as I should go and take tea with Mrs. Maddick, as lived just agin “The Swan,” at Stockwell, as were a bit of a country inn when I was a gal, but now swep away into a fine lookin’ house, but not like the old place a bit.

A kinder creatur than Mrs. Maddick never drew

breath, though a woman as has her faults, for she will let her tongue run that fast, as carries her off her legs, as the sayin' is, and the things as she told me about that young Bartleman a-carryin' on with Lucy Bond a-knowin' him to be a married man, and yet a-dancin' and a-flirtin' with him, as is goin's on as I don't hold with, and so I said, but when she come to say a lot more about everybody, a-runnin' down one and takin' up another, till at last I says, "Mrs. Maddick, mum, excuse me, but," I says, "the dog as can fetch can carry, as the sayin' is, and I don't see as we're a-doin' any good to ourselves nor nobody else for that matter in talkin' about their faults, as p'raps had better look at home as there's none of us as is without faults ourselves." She says, "If you're a-talkin' about me in speakin' of faults, I certainly never had none like them as I'm speakin' on."

"Well, then," I says, "I dare say you'd others, as is p'raps as bad."

She was up in a minnit and asks me what I means by a-talkin' like that to her, and we was driftin' into words, as the sayin' is, when Maddick he come in, and so the subject dropped, and we had tea quite early for to be ready for to set out for Clapham Common, as Maddick said was the best place for to see the company.

Of all the rough characters as ever I see out of town it was along that road. And the scrougin' and pushin' as there was made it very unpleasant, particular to me as had a pair of shoes that big that they wouldn't keep on comfortable, and Maddick is a man as walks like a railway, and all up hill was tryin' to the breath, and boys comin' along a-shovin' and a-drivin' till at last I was obliged for to stop and put my back agin

some railin's, for to recover my breath and pull my shoes on proper.

Well, I was a-takin' on it easy, when all of a sudden I gets a drive from behind as ketched me in the bend of the knee, and down I sat, as anyone nat'rally would, and it's a mercy as it were a prambulator as caught me, though I did sit on the children's legs as didn't hurt them, though nat'rally terrified. But of all the low-lived costers as was drivin' that prambulator I never did, and the female as was with him the abuse as they give in to.

"Come out of the prambulator," hollars he; "you'll smash the kids!"

I says, "It was you as throwed me on 'em, as did ought to be ashamed on yourself, a-actin' that serpitious behind my back, as might have ended serious through me a-fallin' 'eavy." Says the female, for a woman I won't call her, "It's my belief as you sit down malicious, a-thinkin' for to get taken up the 'ill."

"What," I says, "me ride in your rubbishin' prambulator as you've made out of a old dust cart, I should say, by the look on it," for it wasn't a reg'lar prambulator, but a rough hand-barrow like. So says he, "It's lucky as it's pretty tough or you'd have smashed it, and I'd a-made you pay; as did ought to stand a pot as it is."

Well, Maddick come up and took me away just then as they was a-gettin' downright nasty over it, and the children a-roarin' like bulls though not hurt, as how should they be, me only just a-settin' light by their feet, as was whipped up agin in no time by their mother as strong as a horse, as the sayin' is.

I was glad when we got to the Common, though

crowded up a good deal. I'm sure the shay-carts as was overtook in liquor was enough to make anyone stare, with parties dressed out in 'em, as you might have expected carriages and pairs at the very least.

I'm sure them Greenwood gals looked that bold in their father's cart, with the name in gold letters, as I would not have gone out in myself, and a drinkin' ale at a public-house door with their clothes reg'lar ruined with dust, and their hair reg'larly powdered. And as to old Greenwood, as is a butcher, he couldn't set straight though a-holdin' the reins as was a downright farce, not as the horse was likely to run away, for if ever I see a animal dead beat, as the sayin' is, he was standin' in them sharps as the weight behind made stick up to above his head, and seemed to be a-liftin' him off his legs.

We was a-standin' quiet a-lookin' at the four-horse coaches and other conveniences as was comin' on that thick as soon made 'em pull up, and the way parties was a-goin' on made me downright stare, with wails over their 'ats and little Dutch dolls stuck in 'em.

Well, there was a large party in a open carriage as was stopped, a-laughin' rather wild, and I must say, though dressed elegant seemed to me a little on. I was a-standin' on a heap by the roadside as brought me on a level with that carriage.

"I'm sure they've 'ad enough," I says in a whisper to Mrs. Maddick, as couldn't 'ave been laudable in their ears, when I see them take more wine out of a basket and begin to drink free. So says a bold gal, "You'd like a drop, wouldn't you?"

I didn't make no answer, but only give her a look as made her bust out a-laughin', and speak to one of the men as with her. So he looks at me and says,

"Rather? Why she's a reg'lar old woodcock for suction." I couldn't stand that, so I says, "You may jeer, but," I says, "when I do want drink I can get it, and honest too."

I hadn't hardly got the words out when I got a shower of peas right in my face as thick as hail peltin'. I was blinded for the moment, but soon recovered my presence of mind so as to see the fellow as had done it and was up in the dickey. So I ups with my umbrella and give him one for hisself as sent him sprawlin' over, and just then all the carriages began to move on.

Of all the shriekin' as ever you heard it was down-right drowin' to the senses, and I'm sure I screamed as loud as any one through 'avin' been the cause; but, bless you, he'd fell light, as them in liquor always does, and Maddick he caught hold of me and hurried me away, a-sayin', "'Pon my life, Mrs. Brown, you'll get yourself into serious trouble if you will make that free with your umbrella." I says, "Do you think as I'm a-goin' to be insulted like that, and no one to take my part, as if I'd had a man with me would a-done it."

"Who are you a-sayin' is no man?" says Mrs. Maddick, a-bristlin' up. I says, "Never you mind what I'm a-sayin', as don't concern you," and turns away from her.

I'm sure the dust and the noise was that unpleasant as I wished myself home, and bein' hurt with the Maddicks' remarks I walks on by myself, and who should come up but Barnes and Jane, as is Brown's sister, in a four-wheel shay.

"Who'd a-thought of seein' you here?" says they, "as we were a-goin' to call on in our way home, through 'avin' lots of cold meat in the basket, and

thought as he'd take supper with." Well, I was that hurt with the way as the Maddicks had treated me that I says, "Do so." "Well, then," says they, "you'd better get into the seat behind."

I was that tired as I wasn't sorry for the chance. So in I got though dreadful squeezey work through the basket not a-leavin' no room for my legs, and the seat that small as I were more outside than in. If I'd had the least consumption of what I should have had to suffer, nothin' in this world would have got me into the back of that shay; for, bless you, what with the boys a-flickin' at me with whips, a-jumpin' up behind and a-bonnetin' me, and rough characters a-peltin' at me, I never had such a ride. My bonnet was reg'lar smashed, I was hollared at and pelted shameful, parties a-shoutin' out as I should be the death of the horse. One fellow bawls out, "Here's a sack of fat." Another says to Barnes, "Hold hard, there's the back of your shay a-comin' off," as he treated derisive, when just then if the pole of a carriage didn't come right over my shoulder. I gives a wiolent wrench for to save myself, and the seat gave such a crack as made me ketch old of Barnes' coat collar, and pulled him sudden, as made the horse back on to some roughs in a tilt cart, as whipped their horse and got locked in our wheel, and in tryin' to extricate it took the wheel clean off. I felt I was a-goin' gradual, and screamed for help through bein' that terrified as I should have the shay on me, as the basket was quite enough of a good thing on my chest, particularly as the bottles had broke, and I felt all the liquor runnin' over me. They picked me up, but really Jane and Barnes was that unpleasant as when on my legs I walked myself home, as wasn't far off, and haven't

seen nothin' of Barnes and Jane since, nor yet spoke to Mrs. Maddick, as was offended in me a-goin' away ; not as I considers her conduct friendly, and the best way for them as can't agree is to keep separate, and such is my intentions, for the world's wide enough for us all, as the sayin' is.

No. XX.

Mrs. Brown and the Drovers.

IF there is a thing as I can't a-bear the sight on, it's them cows and 'orned brutes as comes a-drivin' through the streets with them drovers after them like whirlwinds through a wilderness, as I never shall forget the way as poor Mrs. Tutton was served by 'em, through bein' deaf as a post, waitin' to cross in fear of the ombli-buses, as comes round you like water as the sayin' is quite unawares, and up to your chin afore you're able to turn round; for never shall I forget that time as the spring tides come into our kitchen, though as to its bein' laid to the spring it's foolishness, for it was Lord Mayor's Day, and took me that unawares through a-goin' down the first thing in the mornin' for a jug to take in the milk, as I hadn't the heart to ring up that gal, as had lain awake for three nights with a ravin' toothache, and wouldn't have it out, though red-hot hair-pins wouldn't pacify it, and bein' all in the dark went splash in half-way up my legs, as give me that turn, and thought the plug of the cistern had come out or the tap left turned, through knowin' as Mrs. Challin ain't no more head than a pin in them things, as is the reason why I won't never have her in

the house through her 'aving left them four gallons and a half of stout a-drippin' to death, as I don't believe ever yielded more than twelve jugs, as is payin' through the nose for your beer, as the sayin' is.

I was a-walkin' quiet down the road Thursday week, a-thinkin' as meat was gettin' frightful up in price, through a-talkin' to Mr. Abud, as is our butcher, a civil man, as sent me a sweetbread out of compliment only last week. He was a-sayin' as butchers must soon all go to the workus.

"Well," I says, "they won't want company there; for I'm sure their customers will go first, as is hard work to keep the wolf from the door, as the sayin' is, though certainly bread was half-a-crown a loaf when my dear mother married that very year, as always said she's lived through that and drove out in her own shay-cart on Sundays all the same. So Mr. Abud he says to me, "Mrs. Brown, mum, I couldn't do you justice in a neck of mutton under eightpence ha'penny."

"Well, then," I says, "you don't send it to me on them terms," as is a wasteful joint in my opinion except in sickness, when broth is wanted; not as I holds much with slops, as only weakens, though pr'aps better than nothin'." "Well," I says, "Mr. Abud, I don't know nothin' about the price what a bit of meat may cost you, but all as I can say is that no hard-workin' man with a large family can afford such a price as is forced into keg-meg as don't nourish, for a little and good is my maxims in all things; but," I says, "there is one thing as I will say, that the way as them cattle is drove is enough for to spoil all the beef in the world." So he says to me, "Any time as you sees any drover a-beavin' brutal you pull him up."

I says, "It's all very fine a-talkin' about pullin' him up, but however am a lone woman to do it?" "Oh," says he, "they're obligated for to have a badge on their arms with a number as they must show." I says, "Then mark my words, if I don't badger 'em next time as I ketches one of them a-overdrivin' a dumb brute without a friend."

Well, as I was a-sayin', a-walkin' down the road slow through a-findin' the weather impressive under my new black velvet mantle, as is wadded throughout, as I put on for the first time, as is a beauty, and cost two pound ten near St. Paul's Churchyard, when I see by the dust as cattle was a-comin'

They was a-strugglin' all over the place, and walkin' on the path, as makes it very unpleasant, and would have gone steady enough along their nat'ral road if them drovers would have let them be, but however can any one walk peaceable with fellows a-shoutin' after you with a dog, and jobbin' at you constant with a stick? I'm sure I couldn't move a inch, and no wonder the poor thing would lay down, as I'm sure I should have done myself, and showed his sense in my opinion a-foamin' like the billers at the mouth.

Well, I nat'ral stopped, through not a-likin' to pass that beast, well knowin' if he got up sudden as was capable of crushin' me agin the railins, through not bein' that active on his legs and apt to stumble, as I should be myself under them circumstances.

Well, the poor brute took and laid down like any Christian, a-sayin' as plain as he could speak, "I'm that tired as must have rest, if I dies for it." Up

comes them drovers, and begins to set the dog at him and hit him over the head.

So I hollars out to them, "You dare for to do it and see if I don't persecute you;" but they didn't take no more notice than if the wind was a-blowin' I hollars louder and shakes my umbrella at them, when one on 'em turns round and told me for to go to where I wouldn't name was it ever so.

I couldn't stand such insults, so I walks up to him and says, "You show me your badge this instant." I never would have believed as any one could have used such langwidge as that drover; but just then he up with his stick for to hit the beast, I caught the blow on my umbreller as I put up for to defend the poor brute, and saw his badge as he'd turned under his arm.

Whether it was his stick or my umbreller flyin' open as startled the animal I can't say, but up it got like a flash of lightnin' and made a rush at me. I turned like the wind and took to my heels, as the sayin' is.

If any one had told me as I could have run so fast I should have denied it flat; but terrors will make you do anythin' I do believe, leastways it made me go along like the wind, for I heard the bullock a-tearin' arter me like mad, with the dog and the drovers a-barkin' and shoutin'

"Get afore 'em," hollars the man, and up comes that dog a-barkin' and a-jumpin' like mad. I'd dropped my umbreller, so hadn't nothing for to keep him off with, and give myself up for lost when my foot slipped and I rolled over the curb right into the middle of the road. However, I'm alive to tell the tale I can't

think, and how them beasts come not to trample me to death, nor even toss me on their 'orns, I can't think; but they all seemed for to turn away when they come near me, and even the dog didn't take no notice on me.

As to them drovers, human bein's they are not, for they never even stopped to pick me up, and if it hadn't been for a Irishwoman as keeps a stall at the corner, I might have been layin' in that road now.

It's a mercy as no omblibuses nor carriages come by or it might have been the end on me. That Irish party was that kind as though I'd been her daughter, and tried for to wipe me down a bit: not as her cloth, though well meant, was what I would have been touched with for the world.

It was a long while afore I could believe as I hadn't broke all my bones; but, as luck would have it, they was all spared me, but I was that shook that I couldn't hardly stand, and shouldn't have been able for to have walked as far as the "Green Man" but for that old woman's arm, as wouldn't take a drop of nothing, but was thankful for threepence as I gave her and a penny to the boy as had picked up my umbreller and brought it me.

I must have set over a hour in the bar of that public-house, as was very quiet and respectable, and kep' by a motherly woman, as gave me a cup of tea, and had my mantle brushed careful, as wasn't much hurt, but my bonnet is crushed beyond hopes.

When I got home I didn't say nothing to Brown; but the next mornin', though feelin' a good deal hurt, I went to Mr. Abud and gave him that fellow's badge, as says to me, "Will your prosecute?"

“Yes,” says I. “Then,” says he, “I’ll have him up if you’ll appear.”

I says, “If I crawls on all fours I’ll have the law of him;” and says Mr. Abud to me, “Right you are!”

No. XXI.

Mrs. Brown before the Magistrate.

I WAS that bruised and stiff after the way as them wagabone drovers had treated me, that I couldn't move for three days without hollarin', and as to bein' rubbed, law bless you, I couldn't have bore a fly to crawl over me, let alone a rough hand and opideldoc. Mr. Abud told me as he'd got the summons out though, agin them fellars as I'd give him the number, as were nine. But as I didn't hear no more about it for nearly a week, I thought as pr'aps it had blowed over, though you never can tell what them magestys will do, for I remember very well a party in the name of Watkins, as kep' a cow-yard, a-dyin' intestines, as the sayin' is, leastways without a will, and a-leavin' a widow as were his second, as the family by the first through spite took and throwed into Chancery, and there she was reduced to a day's charin' for a crust of bread, as turned up right at last, and lived in comfort, through the will bein' found in the thatch of the cow-house, as were in her favour, and rode in her carriage, as I've see her myself, though a low-lived woman as would stoop to strike the cook.

Mr. Abud he stepped round one day when I was

a-feelin' a little better, and says, "You're sure about the number bein' right, Mrs. Brown?" Says I, "Certain, through a-lookin' at it hard under his arm, and nine it was."

"All right," says he, and off he goes and calls in agin to say as he'd took out the summons, and that I must attend on Monday mornin' I didn't say a word to Brown, knowin' as he'd be full of his redicule, but off I went to the police-court as hot a day as ever you felt, and was there punctual at nine, but found as they didn't begin their business till ten. I says, "No wonder there's such lots of bad characters about if they ain't more looked after better than that; nice games they're up to, no doubt, whilst them magistries is away," as come ridin' up on his horse, and not much to look at neither.

Of all the characters as ever you see it was the lot as was brought up for to be judged by that magistrey, as made pretty short work on 'em, as many was to be pitied through bein' locked up on Saturday night, and kep' all day Sunday through bein' overtaken in liquor, as certainly gives time for reflections, as the sayin' is. It's hard though on some, for there was poor Mrs. Willis, as lived within three doors of me, she went out late on a Saturday for to get a little milk, and was took faint agin a post by the "Blue Lion" door, as the police said were intoxication, and locked her up till Monday, and the family nearly mad a-thinkin' as she'd been kidnapped, as would have been any one's work to have done, through bein' fifteen stone, and all swore as she was rollin' and required a stretcher.

I'm sure some of them poor boys and gals as is brought up for stealin' it's downright dreadful to see, as must be trained to it by their parents that young,

and I'm sure for my part I don't wonder, for why ever should they be honest, as hasn't any characters to keep nor decent notions about nothin' As to the men a-beatin' their wives, though not a thing as I holds with, I must say when I see some of them as come to appear agin their husbands, the dirty hussies with infants more neglectful than themselves, as is enough to aggravate a man to come home and find not a bit of fire, and the children all in bed huddled up all day, and her away gossipin' and drinkin' at the public-house.

One woman was a-settin' down by me as was a-howlin' a deal and sayin' as he were a willin. So I says, "I dare say as he may be ; but in my opinion a good wife would bring a husband round." So she says, "Who says I ain't a good wife?"

I says, "No one ; only," I says, "a wife may do a good deal, and not go a-speakin' agin a man and tryin' his temper, or flyin' to drink, as only brings miseries." She says, "Who says as I drinks or brings miseries?" and she was a-goin' on furious when they took her before the magistrey, as dismissed her case.

Well, as she come out of the place, and was passin' where I was a-standin', she says, "Come out of the way, old water-but. I should like to serve the lot of you out," and give me a shove quite wiolent and knocked me down on the laps of parties as was a-settin' there waitin' as was rude in their remarks. I'd a-give her in charge as the policeman wanted, only but for the infant, as were a-frettin', poor thing.

I waited and waited till I was nearly famished, and see nothing of nobody as could tell me anything about that drover a-comin' till at last a policeman, and I'm sure if I'd asked one I had twenty, told me it wouldn't come on that day. "Well, then," I says, "I'll go

home and thankful," and so I did, and was dead tired, but resolved to have the law on that fellow, so went the follerin' day at ten punctual. I'm sure I wished myself away fifty times, for through the police a-knowin' me agin as had had a glass of ale together the day afore I got into the court, as was stiflin' very near, and if they didn't bring a man up as had killed his wife and children, and tried for to do the same by hisself. Well, it give me such a awful turn, for he was a gashly sight, I can tell you, all strapped up, and lookin' that deadly as you never did. I says, "Rubbish," I says, "he's mad, and didn't ought to have been let at large." Well, they was a long time a-talkin', and I'd a give the world to get out of the place, and the neighbours come in for to say what they'd see and heerd, as was a low-life gossipin' lot, and there was that poor wretch dead-faint a-settin' there a-droopin' like. So at last I says, "If you wants to finish him off, as is pr'aps as well, and save you trouble, you'll keep him here." They all hollars out "Silence."

I says, "I shan't silence, for it's my duty for to speak: that man's a-dyin' for want of air, as I'm nearly doin' myself." I couldn't have believed as I could have been got out of that crowded place as quick as I were, for two police had me through the door almost instant, as I were thankful for, though I did lose my collar and my black welwet bag, though nothin' in it. Says the police to me, "It's lucky as you ain't sent to prison for interruptin' the business like that."

I says, "Me interrupt the business? I only spoke as any one ought to," and right I proved, for the man rainted off dead-like, and they had to bring him out,

as a policeman told me. It's lucky as I had sandwiches with me, or else I never should have got on, and it's well as I eat 'em in that court, or they'd have been lost in my welwet bag. So as soon as I got out I had a glass of ale, and then I waited and waited, till I thought I should have dropped.

At last I says, "I shan't wait no longer, hang the drovers for me." So I walks into a wine waults and has some hot rum and water, as is a thing as suits me, for though warm weather I felt as them stone passages had struck me. I just finished it, and was leavin' the house, when the policeman as knowed me comes up, and says, "Your case is a-comin' on."

Out I went; there was Mr. Abud. He says, "Didn't you get my message?" I says, "Never." "Why," he says, "I sent word by the boy as I'd call for you, and might have saved you a deal of time and trouble."

I says, "You might indeed," for I felt put out and irritated like.

Well, we goes into the place, and they was a-goin' to swear me, when I says, "Which is the man?" Says a party, "That's him opposite." "Never," says I. "Bless you, that drover as insulted me was a short, thick-set young fellow," and there stood a poor miserable old creature as I could 'ave pushed over with a touch.

Says the man as had the book in his hand, "Are you a-goin' to be sworn?" I says, "Not by no means, seein' as that ain't the party at all." "Then the summons is dismissed, and you must pay," says he. I says, "What for?" "Why," he says, "you've been and summoned the wrong man."

I says, "It's false, I've done nothin' of the sort.

I summoned number nine." "There he is," says the magistrey. "No," says I, "quite different." "Show your number," says the magistrey. No he did on his arm.

I says, "That's not the way to wear it." "Yes," says they, "it is." "No," I says, "let him turn it the other way." "Why," says the magistrey, "that would make it nine." "That's what I say; then why not turn it," says I. "That wouldn't make it the right man," says he.

"Then it ought to," says I, "and you must be a pretty magistrey to set there and let any one be 'umbugged like this." He give me such a look, and says, "Turn that old woman out; she's not in a fit state to be here. She's stiflin' us with her rum."

I says, "How dare you for to say so! Me smell of rum, why I've only——" He says, "Remove her." I says, "I'm not goin' to be turned out like a dog when I've come here for my rights." He says, "Clear the court," as was no doubt glad to get away.

So when I come out I see Mr. Abud, as says, "How could you make such a mistake?" I says, "it wasn't no mistake, it's not my fault if nine upside down is six;—it didn't ought to be allowed, as is done of course to deceive parties; but," I says, "as to that magistrey, he did ought to be put down, insultin' me like that."

Well, I see Mr. Abud smile, but didn't take no notice till the chap come by as held the book. So I says to him, "You may tell your magistrey from me as I don't consider him no gentleman to treat a lady like that." He says, "No, I dare say not, you'd rather be treated to rum-and-water."

I says, "What do you mean, as only took the least drop?" "Well, then," he says, "consider yourself lucky as you wasn't locked up for comin' into court in a enubriated state, as isn't decent, and might have been took up for perjury agin that drover."

I says, "Mr. Abud, did you ever! Did I seem as if I'd been a-drinkin'?" "Well," he says, "I must say as you was powerful of rum." So I says, "It's best for to be insulted gross, and drove over by beasts, for they don't treat so bad as your fellow creatures."

The money as I had to pay for to buy that drover off as had been summonsed wrong, and the costs of that magistrey as did nothin', aggravated me. And no wonder parties never tries to get their rights, for it costs more money than they're worth, to say nothin' of the time as you loses, as is more than money, as the sayin' is.

No. XXII.

Mrs. Brown on the Panic.

OF course we've all had our panics, leastwise I have, for I'm sure that time as the kitchen chimbley was a-fire next door, and they played the engine down my front parlour by mistake, and drowned everything, was a panic, let alone other shocks ; but certainly I never shall forget Mrs. Fruin a-comin' in a Saturday morning, just as Brown was gone, sayin' to me all of a flurry, "Have you 'eard the new?"

"What news?" says I. "'Ave the French landed?" "No," says she, "but the Bank of England." "Burnt down," says I. "No," says she, "but broked to bits." "What," I says, "with my Aunt Chadwick's money in it ; it can't be?" "Yes," she says, "they've been and suspended his charter, as they can't act without, and it's all over." I says, "Whatever 'ave they done with the counsels as I gets seventeen pounds ten a-year from, let alone Brown's bit of money?" "Oh," says she, "no doubt they've stopped to."

I was that upset and says, "I can't think where Brown said he was a-goin' to," for I'd have stepped up to him to ask what I'd best do. "Well," I says, "at

any rate I'll go up and ask 'em what they means to do, as did ought to have mentioned to me, and only there last month for my dividend, and that fellow to pay me my quarter as calm, and never as much as change colour in givin' it to me, well knowin' all the time as it was the last. It's a holler deceitful world," says I. Mrs. Fruin she says, "That's true, that is; for I'm sure the thousands as Fruin has lost in them land companies, no one wouldn't believe, as we might have been ridin' in our carriage," as made me laugh in my sleeves, through well knowin' as Fruin hadn't a brass farthin' to bless hisself with."

"Well," I says, "I'll go to the City anyhow." So says Mrs. Fruin, "You ain't fit to—let me go along with you." I didn't want her company, but it didn't seem civil-like for to refuse, but I was that shaky through the shock as she'd give me that I was quite obligated to take a little somethin', as I see Mrs. Fruin was makin' very short work with. I didn't like to put away the bottle in goin' up to put on my bonnet, as I hurried through very quick with; but when I come down bless you she'd drained it dry, as is a reg'lar old sponge at liquor.

Well, we got the omblibusall right, as there was a old gentleman in a-reading his paper, and if Mrs. Fruin a-gettin' in didn't fall right on him, as said in a rage "Conductor, this female 's intosticated, get her out." It was all very well to talk of gettin' her out, but it wasn't no easy matter for to move her. So as the conductor said "I can't stop here all day a-trying to get her out," as was seated firm as a rock in the end of the bus by that time.

I says, "Excuse me," I says, "intosticated she is not neither, bein' a female, but," I says, "far from

strong," as by that time had got her breath, and was a-sheddin' tears on the quiet, through her feelin's bein' hurt in them old gentleman's remarks. We was put out of the bus at Gracious-street, and I did not hold with Mrs. Fruin's abuse of that old gentleman, as made him threaten her with the police. So I just popped into a respectable wine vaults, and give her the slip.

Somehow the shock as I'd had and the omblibus together had give me such a turn that I took a little drop hot, as seemed to bring the life into me, and off I goes to the Bank. Of all the crowds as ever I see it was in one of them streets where the bankers lives. I asks a policeman a civil question, but law, he said as he hadn't no time to talk to old women as hadn't no business there. I says, "How do you know as I've no business here?" "Well, then," he says, "if you've come after your money get it quick and go home." I says, "I will," and off I walks.

I never did see more anxious faces than there was in that street, and parties a-talkin' and a-whisperin', though lots on 'em was, no doubt, idle curiosity, as I said to a party in a white apron as was standin' up a court as I'd been reg'lar shoved into. Everyone was agin me. Some said, "Don't block the way up like that, my good woman." I says, "I ain't no more a block than yourself." Another chap says, "What can this old grampus want?" Then a cheeky young fellow says, "'Ave you brought a barrow for your money?"

So I says to the party in the apron, "It's a down-right disgrace as the police don't clear the streets of such characters." "Law bless you," he says, "the Lord Mayor hisself is out a-tryin' for to get rid of them idlers."

I says, "Do you think as I can get at the Bank?"

Just as he was a-goin' to answer there came a rush of men as seemed to sweep me with them, and I was carried into 'a doorway that narrow as I just filled it up. I never did see the way as I was insulted. "Come out of the way," says one.

"I can't," says I. "You're stoppin' the business of the house," says a party as was inside.

"Whatever am I to do?" says I, for there was such a crowd in the street I couldn't get out. I was reg'lar jammed in that doorway. I says, "It's no use drivin' at me like that, as must be my death if you goes on, and will not clear the door."

At last up come two policemen, as made up to me and dragged me that wiolent out of the doorway as half my clothes was nearly off my back. I really do think as I must have been tore piecemeal if it hadn't been as a nice lookin' old gentleman desired them police to let me alone, and I was that terrified by the way as I'd been treated that I busted into tears. Says the old gentleman, "What's the matter? What brings you here?" "Well," I says, "sir, my little bit of property as is gone for ever."

"Where was your property?" says he. "In the Bank," says I, "where my Aunt Chadwick put it when her good gentleman was took, as made his money in the cement line, and left her comfortable, as though not much, I always looked to."

"No doubt you did," says the old gentleman, "take my advice, and go home quietly. Now, I dare say you'll hear that it's all right, but you can do no good here, and are only in the way." "Well," I says, "I may be, but everyone for their own, and my little bit of money is as much to me as 'as sovereigns a-growin' in their gorgin' palisades, for," I says,

“them as has millions is only slaves after all, as the sayin’ is, and we all knows as a dinner of herbs on a peaceful heart is better than gold and silver, as will never satisfy the appetites.”

So the old gentleman says, “You’re quite a philosopher.” I says, “Never! I’d scorn the action, as has worked hard in my day, and wouldn’t stoop for to do a mean action not if you was to crown me Queen Victoria on the spot.”

Well, by this time the old gentleman, as smiled werry pleasant, had took me out of the worst of the crowd, and says, “Where do you want to go?” I says, “To the Bank of England for to ask a civil question as demands a civil answer.”

He says, “You’d better go home, unless it’s somethin’ very pressin’.” “Well,” I says, “I don’t say as it will beggar us, for we have got some houses, but it’s seventeen pounds a year as has come in very convenient, reg’lar as the water, but now of course all gone.”

So he says, “What bank is it in?” I says, “In the Bank of England, as is broke.”

“Ah,” he says, “if that’s all, don’t you be afraid; they’ll find money enough to pay you, take my word for it.” I says, “You don’t say so. Well, then, pr’aps they’ll give it me now, and Brown too, if I can prove myself his lawful wife.”

He says, “They won’t do that, so you’d better go home;” and he calls a policeman, as touched his hat quite respectful, and says to him, “See this good lady safe out of the crowd,” and he says, “Yes, my lord.” So he was a real lord as had been talking to me, but I didn’t find out who he was through bein’ that flurried that I forgot to ask the policeman as was a-hurryin’

me through the crowd, but he's a dear old soul, whoever he is.

I was glad to get away from all that confusion, and was a-gettin' on slow towards London Bridge when I felt such a drive in the back as made me turn round sudden, and there was Mrs. Fruin that far gone in liquor as quite startled me. Her face was flamin' scarlet, and her eyes staring out of her head. "Oh," she says, "you old reptile, for to go and give me the go-by like that as has been insulted shameful." Well, I was a-goin' to make a bolt on it, but she rushes at me, and says, "No you don't, I've got you now, and will keep you fast." I says, "Let me alone." She says, "Give me my money as I trusted to you this morning." I says, "Trusted your money to me! Why, you're mad." She says, "Then I've spent it in treating you to liquor." I never was so took aback, for there come a crowd round us, as was makin' their jeerin' remarks. I heard one say as I didn't look much like a thief, and another says, "Oh, bless you, thieves nowadays comes out quite genteel." I could not stand bein' spoken of as a thief in the public streets like that, so I says, "Excuse me, ladies, but I'm nothin' of the sort, and as to this party, I knows but little on her, as I needn't say what she is as speaks for itself."

I hadn't got the words out afore that wixen made a rush at me as I managed for to ewade, and if she didn't go slap into the kennel. Up comes the police, and collars her. "Don't let the other escape," says a fellow; and I should a-been took up as safe as houses if them two ladies as took me for a thief hadn't spoke up for me.

All as I could do was to give my name and also

Mrs. Fruin's, as they wanted me to see home. "No," I says, "I shouldn't be safe in the wehicle with such a character;" so I says, "Do as you like with her," and I gets a cab and goes home.

The way as Brown rediculed me about the Bank of England bein' broke was enough to aggrawate any one, till at last my temper got rumped, and I says, "Mr. Brown, you may jeer as much as you pleases, but," I says, "I hopes as the next time as your money is endangered as you'll get some one else to care about it, for I never shall; and if I was to see the Bank of England a-dissolvin' like a view, depend on it as I should never give myself the trouble to look after it," and up I goes to bed in a huff.

As to that Mr. Fruin, she come round the next day a-tryin' the cantin' dodge, but it wasn't no go with me; I only says, "Mrs. Fruin, mum, the world is wide enough for both of us, so you take your side and I'll take mine;" and that's the way we parted, for I had no patience with her a-makin' a fool of me like that, besides being a downright dis- herself.

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